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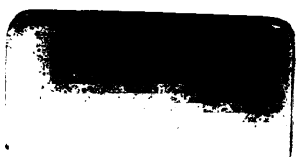
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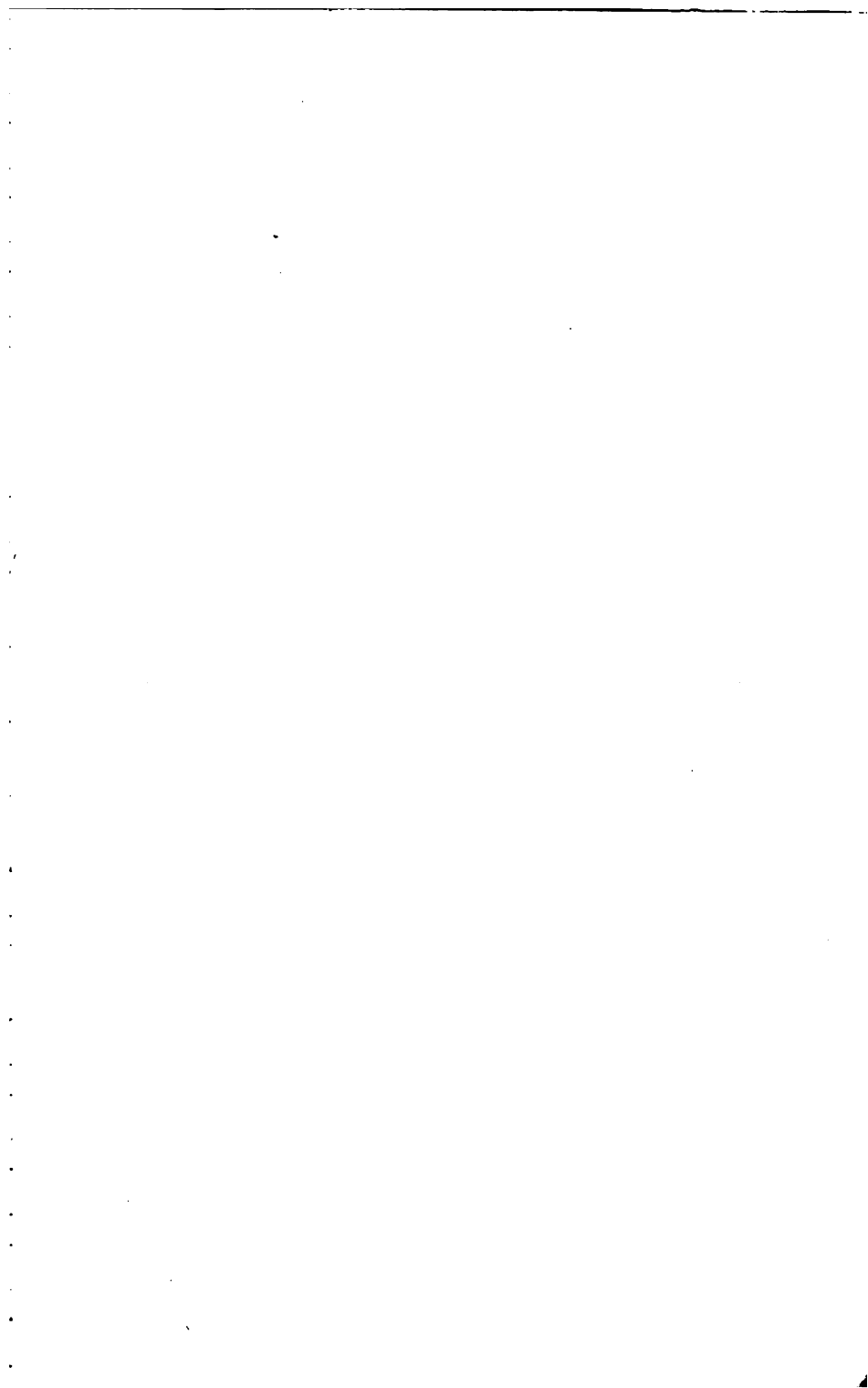


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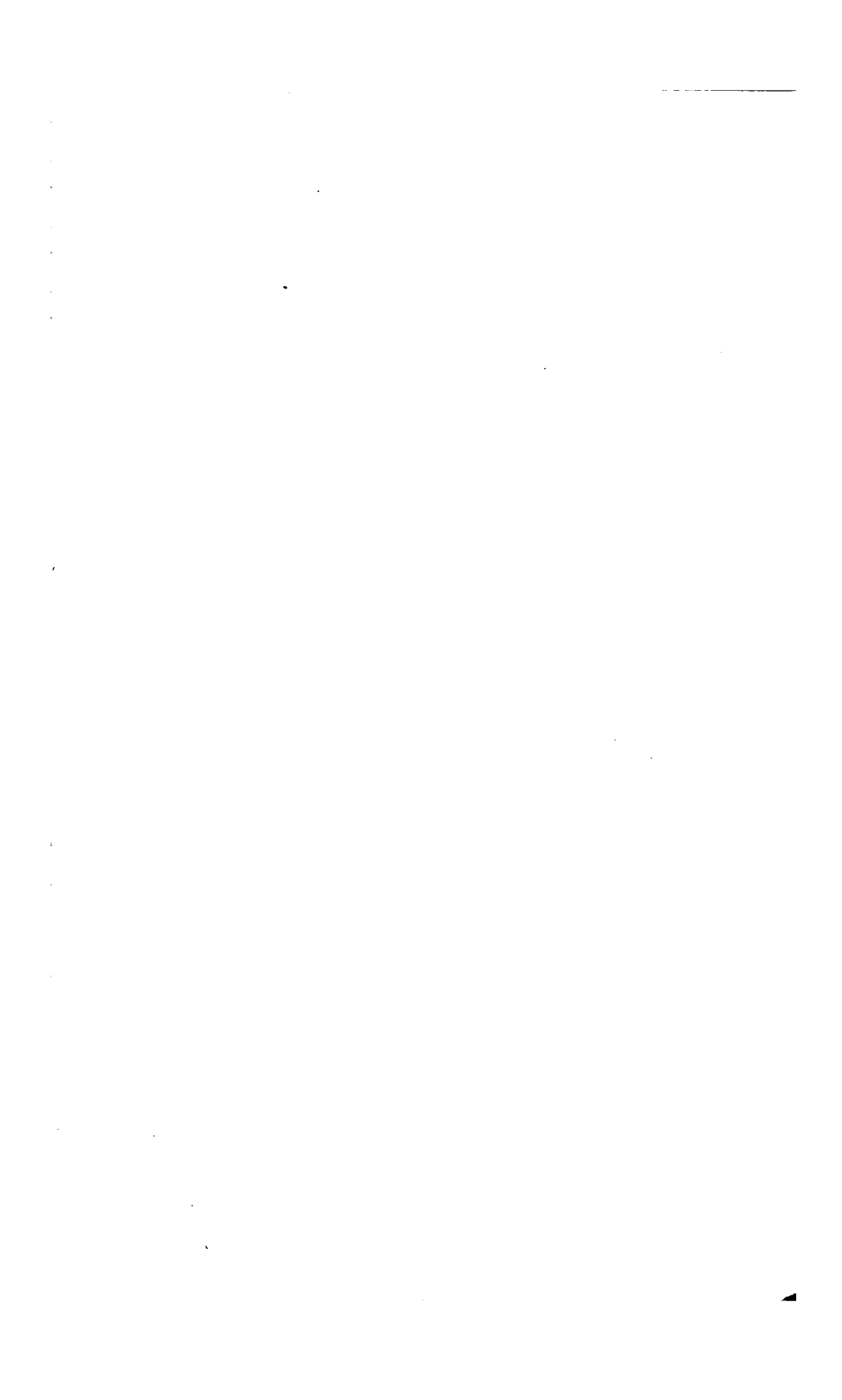


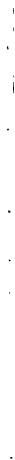
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THE
CONFLICT OF GOOD AND EVIL
IN OUR DAY.

TWELVE LETTERS TO A MISSIONARY.

By THE REV. F. D. MAURICE, M.A.,
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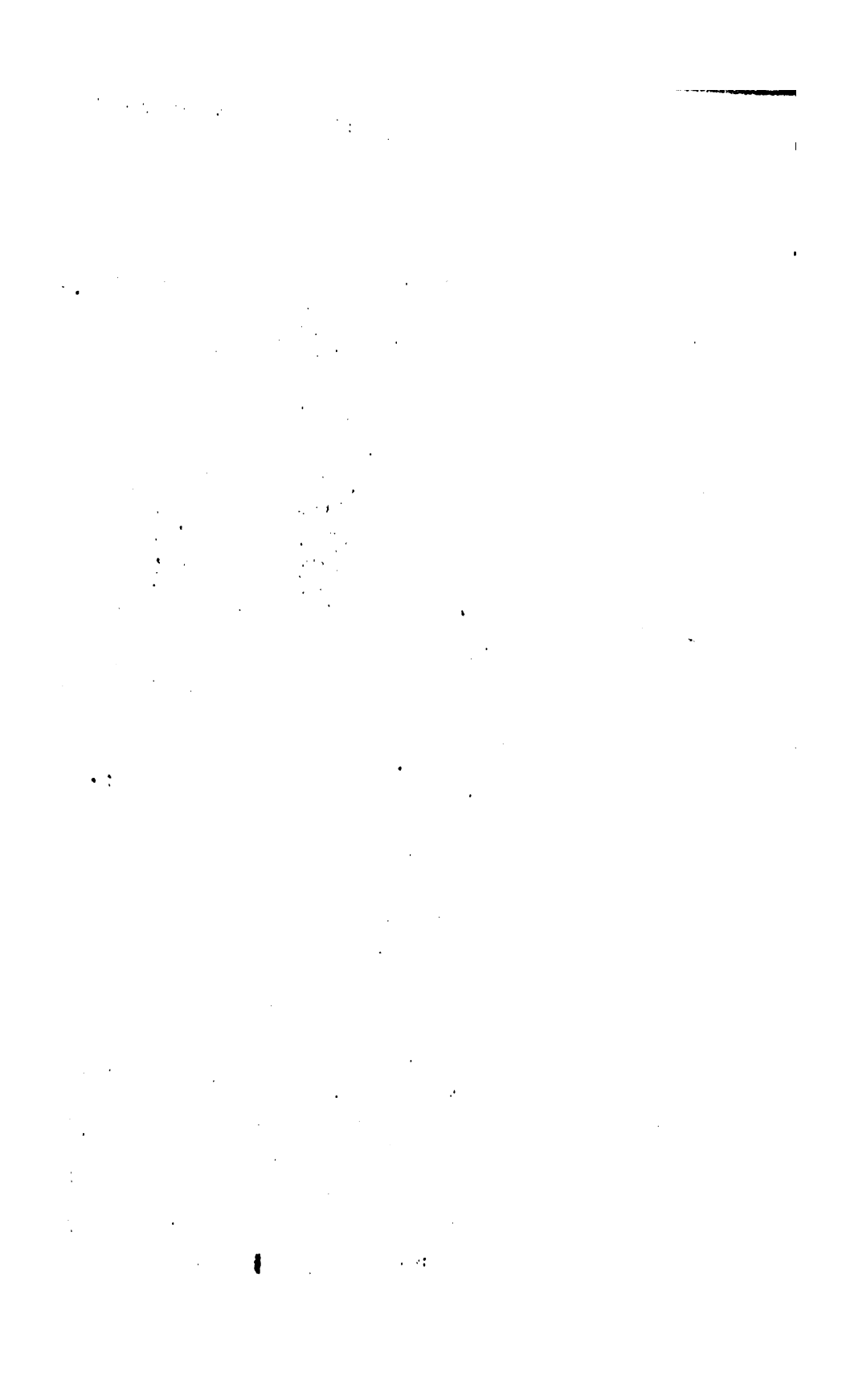
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PREFACE.

THE speech of the Lord Bishop of Oxford, to which I have alluded so often in these letters, was delivered at a meeting of the two Societies for the Propagation of the Gospel, and for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, in Salisbury. A report will be found in the *Guardian* of August 23rd. From that paper I extract the passages on which I have commented.

I.

“I have no doubt myself that the last attempt upon the faith of Christ will come, not with an open denial of its verity, but with a courteous admission of its truth. At the same time there will be a sapping of its distinctive features.”

II.

“I have no doubt myself that unbelief contains within itself the seed of the most intensely hating persecution which the world has ever seen.

Instead of being tolerant, I believe it is the very perfection of intolerance. I believe when it has achieved its own victory, toleration will be the thing which above all others it will hate with an intensity short only of the hatred which the Evil Spirit has for the simple gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

III.

“ It must be so, I think, because unbelief, in whatever form it comes, is the exaltation of the human intellect and human will over the voice of revelation and revealed knowledge. It is thwarted to the utmost the very moment it is confronted by the mighty rock of revealed Truth. The stream flows on with the most delicious smoothness when there is nothing to thwart it. ‘ Let us love one another, let us be tolerant of one another’s views. If you choose to worship the devil, worship him, if you only do it quietly : if you choose to worship an Anti-devil, so do, if you only do it quietly ; let us go on altogether in our worldly ways and worldly thoughts, holding nothing that may be troublesome or disagreeable. Anything disagreeable in religion is such a shocking thing.’ Well, then comes the most disagreeable thing possible, which says, ‘ We have nothing to do with this fellowship of Evil. You

are leading men to absolute destruction. You are promising them liberty, and making them slaves. You are handing them over to the devil under the pretence of emancipation from their shackles.' (Applause.) And forthwith these men turn upon the stern declaration of the eternal verity of God with all the hatred of the human heart which the great rebel himself can stir up within it."

IV.

"Believing, then, as I do, that there may be heard upon the winds these footfalls of the coming of the great Antichrist; that this which we hear whispered, and spreading, we know not how, through the air, is just the precursing atmosphere which comes before his advent—I say it is the time, if ever the time was, for those who fear and love the Lord, to be rousing themselves up and to be working mightily that they may establish indeed the hiding-places of the faith throughout the earth. . . . And how is this to be obtained? Most directly and immediately, I believe, by great missionary efforts."

V.

"Who can doubt that it is so? When we read only to-day in the cathedral of God, '*I will*

send great plagues upon men and beasts,' could any of you help thinking of the signs of the present time? Is not this mysterious disease which has entered among our cattle at this moment—is not that, if the Bible be true, one of God's hand-writings on the nation's wall, warning them to turn to Him? Then remember the whisper rising now almost into a voice, of the onward march of the old pestilence of the cholera, which I remember so well in this city, at its great visitation. It is again rustling upon the breeze of the evening. And is not this another of God's writings on the wall, warning you that you do His work, and turn to Him while yet the opportunity of turning to Him is left?"

These are the sentences of the speech which chiefly concern my subject. I have alluded to some others, which contained an attack upon the Bishop of Natal. I omit them as much from respect to the accuser as to the accused.

I ought to say that the person to whom these letters are addressed, will not see them till they reach him in this volume.

THE CONFLICT

OR

GOOD AND EVIL IN OUR DAY.

LETTER I.

THE BISHOP'S WARNINGS.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Why have I not done more to strengthen you in your hard conflict with heathens and Mahometans, to cheer you in your separation from the blessings of Christendom? You may well ask me this question. I have asked it myself very often. The answers which my conscience has heard may console you for my silence; but they testify against my coldness and infidelity.

I could not strengthen you in your conflict, for I was full of despondency about it myself.

“What are our missionaries doing?” is a demand which we hear continually. “Those reports which we read, those speeches which are made at their public meetings, tell us nothing. We cannot trust them. The most faithful narratives we can get are narratives of failure and disappointment. The converts, how few they are! Are those few the salt which can penetrate the surrounding mass and purify it? Where are the signs of any great movement like that which moulded the European nations into a Christendom? The colonists are energetic and able, full of zeal and enterprise. But what do they care for the conversion of the natives to Christianity? How many of them believe in it? Are not all our religious debates repeated with even increased fury amongst those who go forth to preach of one Lord, one faith, one baptism? Missionaries talk about the bad morals of civilians and military men. Are not these strifes amongst themselves more fatal to their work, and more direct confutations of their arguments?” Whilst such words were ringing in my ears, and exercising, I will not deny it, a great influence over my heart and mind, what could I say which might not add to the thousand perplexities by which you are beset?

And then as to your isolation from Christendom. Ah, my friend! how often those who live in the midst of it are tempted to reckon that among your advantages! That it is most ungrateful to do so,—that we should feel the tremendous difference, if the atmosphere by which we are surrounded were exchanged for yours,—this in our hearts we know very well. We are not quite young enough to dream of any beauty in savage existence; Oriental civilization can scarcely fascinate any who are not dreamers; any serious men who understand what it is. But you know what confessions we make of our state, even while we boast that we are better than all the nations of the West. The confessions certainly fall below the truth, whatever may be the truth of the boast. Is it not difficult, then, to pretend that we count our position an enviable one, or that we sincerely deplore the lot of those who have left it behind them?

Then though a number of answers, clever and even satisfactory in their way, have been made to the cry so often raised in the newspapers, "What! ask for help to convert distant lands, when all these wretched multitudes are lying at your doors?"—though *the* answer, that we *do* think it worth while for some purposes to visit distant lands, and to

settle in them, and that wherever we go or settle we must exercise an influence—for good or for evil—is a sufficient one for all practical purposes ; yet the argument appeals to something in us against which reasoning cannot always prevail. If our first business is to renovate those for whom the Bishop of London pleads by his fund, or the crowds which fill our manufacturing towns—even our agricultural labourers—when will there be leisure for the work which is to follow that ? When indeed !

My friend, if I was to inflict upon you all these murmurings, was it not better to hold my peace ? And yet to write what was not in my mind, or to hide what was, or to speak to you only of domestic interests, would have been a greater wrong. What I have to confess is, not so much my silence as that which caused it : the secret heartlessness and cowardice which unfitted me for holding converse with you—a heartlessness and cowardice as fatal to sincere efforts for the cure of our diseases at home as to any counsels we may offer to you who are afar off.

I can speak, or rather I must speak, to you now, because I have been brought to the conviction that the same causes which make you weak are making us weak ; that our dangers are

the same ; that in spite of the great differences in our circumstances our battle is essentially the same. I have been brought, I say, to this *conviction* : I may have had a general impression that it was so, that it could not be otherwise ; I may even at times have tried to communicate that impression to my neighbours. But it has been too feeble to resist all the influences of doubt and despondency—all the plausible excuses for indifference—which it encountered. Now these very influences, those plausible excuses appear to me the strongest reasons for claiming fellowship in your labours. The faith and zeal which are deserting us, you may help to rekindle. Instead of our communicating to you, or you to us, the palsy which has benumbed the limbs of both, we may, in God's name, bid each other rise up and walk.

I never expected that the report of words spoken at a missionary meeting would have awakened—have even helped to awaken—this hope in me. The rhetoric at those meetings has done much to weaken my interest, and, I fear, that of many more, in the cause which it professes to uphold. There is something in it against which the sense of truth in our minds vehemently revolts. And yet an address emi-

nently rhetorical—to me most painfully rhetorical—has done me a service, for which I trust I shall ever be grateful.

In a speech which was delivered by the Bishop of Oxford last August, he is reported to have commented on the habit of indifference to great theological distinctions which is prevalent amongst us. He said that we might come at last to confound the worship of God with the worship of the Devil, and to feel that it signified nothing which we worshipped. He said that he saw signs of an approaching manifestation of the Antichrist. He warned his hearers that they might become the servants of the Antichrist, instead of the true Christ. He said that when the Antichristian power was developed, it would be found to be a persecuting power; that all our boasted toleration would then disappear. He made these his great pleas for strenuous exertion at home as well as abroad.

If these statements are true, the inference from them seems to me inevitable. The battle at home, as much as abroad, is with false gods. We, as much as you, are to turn men from the worship of tyrants to the worship of a Deliverer. And you can give us hints which we

greatly want; you can untie or cut knots for us which are becoming every day more complicated. But are the statements true? Their effect upon devout and earnest minds was much impaired by some sentences which were mixed with them. They took the form of an attack upon a Bishop who was not present to answer for himself, who was charged with undermining the Word of God, and whose arguments were to be met with a shout of indignation. Flowers of rhetoric, which must appear to readers, if not to hearers, artificial and tawdry, were scattered over admonitions, which demanded, if any ever did, simplicity and sternness, an abstinence from anything which had the air of display and trifling. Allusions to the Cholera and the Cattle Plague, blended with language concerning Antichrist, gave that language a sensational, even a grotesque character. Some excellent persons, who read the report of the speech, turned from it, I observed, with disgust, as from a message in which there was a semblance of awe, an absence of reality.

I understood the feeling, and was at first inclined to share in it. But the more I reflected on the substance of the discourse, the more I was convinced that it was both real and awful. I read an able answer to it. The objector com-

plained of the Bishop for misrepresenting the character of our time, the conflict in which we are engaged. Good and evil, he said, instead of standing glaringly apart from each other, as they did in the time of St. Paul, are strangely and cunningly interwoven. The skill required of us is to disentangle the threads. No remarks can be more true; none seem more to confirm the Bishop's warnings. It is precisely the confusion of good and evil which he points out as our peril. He says, as his critic says, that we are always hovering between the right and the wrong, the false and the true, till we forget that there is any radical difference between them, till one slides into the other. He thinks such uncertainty about eternal principles is not to last; that if God is what we confess Him to be, it must come to an end. He holds that if we have that amazing difficulty in discerning between forms which are everlastingly opposed to each other,—if we are inclined to deny that they *are* really opposed—the contrast will in some tremendous way be made manifest. The more, therefore, he discovers of that twilight which leads his commentator to discredit the approach of any decisive day that shall scatter the darkness, the more the Bishop is convinced that such a day must

be at hand. If the premises of the one are right, I hope the conclusion of the other is right. The belief that it is right grows more strong in me the more I look at the signs of our time.

Nor, grievously as I lament the party tone which the Bishop of Oxford was tempted to give to warnings that must be needful for all if they are needful for any, can I deny that they have an application—a very direct application—to the controversies which have been recently stirred respecting the Old Testament. Though the battle between the God of perfect Truth and Goodness and the Spirit of Evil may have been only brought to its complete development when Christ went into the wilderness to be tempted,—it is the most obvious, and at the same time the most profound conception of the Hebrew Scriptures, that they exhibit the conflict between the true God and false gods. We shall recover that conception of them, if we learn that the calling of the chosen people is our calling ; then questions about the dates of books or the writers of them, even about the times when the names Elohim and Jehovah were used or were not used, will not torment us much or withdraw us from the actual history. We shall not easily forget in such arguments a conflict in which all ages and all

classes of men are involved. The critics may carry on their controversy, they will not persuade us that it is the human controversy. And if this return to a more ancient and serious apprehension of the object of these books lowers the exaggerated pretensions of those who discuss their origin, it must also discourage any panic which such discussions have provoked. The Bishop's admonitions, then, are not really, though they may be on the surface, party admonitions. He must have intended, not to direct a shout against certain persons or a certain school, but to say to every man of every school, in a voice which should reach his conscience, "Thou art in danger of worshipping the Devil instead of God. Thou art in danger of exalting the Antichrist into the place of the Christ."

I feel and confess this danger for myself. I began with explaining to you how the want of a full, clear sense of it—which made it greater—has tended to weaken my sympathies with your labours. I wish, if I may be permitted, to write you something which shall be an acknowledgment of that offence, perhaps a slight reparation for it. The words of the Bishop will be the text of all my observations.

At first I was inclined wholly to pass over

his reference to the disease which may invade our land. How much that reference grated upon the moral sense even more than upon the taste of readers whom the Bishop would not have desired to offend, I have hinted. Nevertheless, I have remembered how likely words coming from such a source are to give the keynote to much of the preaching in our pulpits respecting the Cholera, while it is expected and if it should come. I have remembered, also, how much your experience as to the way in which such visitations are regarded by heathens may benefit us. The subject is connected—directly connected—with the question of devil-worship which the Bishop has raised, and which I am anxious to consider. Perhaps it may suggest the simplest illustration of one aspect of that worship. I shall therefore address myself to it in the next letter.

—Yours, &c.

LETTER II.

THE CHOLERA, AND DISEASES IN GENERAL.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—You must have been in England during more than one of our visitations of Cholera. With your medical knowledge and medical experience you must have felt painfully the use which was made of it in some of our pulpits. Perhaps your mind will often have been exercised with the question, “In what way should I bring it before my congregation? If I increase the panic, I am doing my best that those who are attacked by the disease should sink under it; that those who are not attacked by it should avoid their neighbours. My preaching, so far as it is of this character, must defeat all the efforts which I or any others may make for the cure of the plague. I shall convince the doctor that his object and ours are not merely different, but opposed. I shall enfeeble the charity which my office as a clergyman binds

me to cultivate. Yet what am I to do? Is not this a call to men to repent and to be converted? Am I not to tell them that it is? Am not I separating myself from the teachings of the old Prophets if I say that famines and pestilences are not divine messages to a nation?"

I do not know whether you found any satisfactory answer to these questions. I know you will have done the duty which lay before you; that you will have let no speculations interfere with that. So you will have come at a practical solution of the difficulties, which was better than any theoretical one could be. You will have been sure that you were right in trying to arrest the disorder, and to cheer men whom it assailed. You will have hoped that you should be kept from any wrong mode of speaking about it in church.

Am I mistaken in thinking that your experience in other lands has led you to a much clearer apprehension of the whole subject; to a much more complete reconciliation of your convictions as a physician, and your convictions as a divine; to a far better understanding of the words of the Jewish Prophets? Shall I misrepresent the case if I add that the heathens have taught you these lessons; that they have shown how

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many of the confusions which are working in their minds were working in your own ; what must be the help against these confusions for them and for you ? What they think of diseases, you had been told before you went among them. You had heard that they traced every sickness to some malignant power ; that they supposed that power must be conciliated by some gift or offering before the disease could be taken away. The commonest classical reading made you aware of this fact ; you had divested it of all graceful classical associations by studying it afresh in the records of coarse modern idolatry. No doubt you had thought with yourself often how greatly medical knowledge might contribute to the overthrow of this superstition, how much it might prepare the way for the Gospel which you were to preach. But all such anticipations, I should conjecture, however strengthened by reading and reflection, prepared you very little for what you were actually to witness : for the enormous hold which this feeling—this belief—had on the minds of those whom you were to teach. You will sometimes, I should suppose, have said to yourself, “ Surely *this* is the religion of the people ; all their other religion is merely the outgrowth of this ; something grafted on the conviction that

disease and death are the messengers of an evil power." Then you will have altered that opinion. You will have perceived that there was a faith fighting in them with this, the acknowledgment of invisible protectors, powers of life. You will have perceived that they turned to the physician, in whatever form he presented himself, as the agent of those benevolent powers, the combatant of the destructive powers. Such observations will have strengthened your conviction that the art of medicine must be one of the missionary's main instruments. You will have begun at once to work that instrument, to show the poor native what the knowledge and the tenderness of the white man could do for him.

But then to connect this healing with your preaching: to prove that it was not the white man, but the white man's God from Whom this knowledge and tenderness proceeded: how was this to be accomplished? Let me ask you to admit frankly. Have not thoughts of this kind sometimes taken strong possession of your mind?

"If I had the miraculous powers which the holiest missionaries have assumed, and in the explanation for which they seem to owe much of their influence, would not the difference between the dark gods and the white man's God be far

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more conspicuous? Could I not then call on the natives to see that He is a Deliverer, and not a Destroyer?" Yes! there will have been moments in which these suggestions will have been vividly presented to you, in which they will have taken the form of a temptation. And if as a temptation you treated them—if as a temptation you overcame them—I am certain you will have found by degrees a blessed reward. You will have felt that you were in very deed serving a God of Truth, Who would be served by no lie; that the conflict in which you were engaged was the conflict between the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Lies. That grand theological distinction, which is at the root of all others—and which the Bishop of Oxford so solemnly and earnestly admonishes us that we are in peril of losing—will have come out in its full force before you. The sense of fighting under such a banner, for such a cause, will have given you a strength which nothing else could give.

But this blessing will bring another after it. You wish to show the natives that your God is a Deliverer, not a Destroyer. Do you want to make Him out a God of falsehood, that you may do that? Were you not taught the lesson in Protestant lands, out of the book to which Protestants and Romanists both appeal? If you

accept the preface to the Ten Commandments, must you not believe that God revealed Himself to the mixed multitude who came out of Egypt, as a Deliverer; that He said they should have no other gods but Him? Is not the whole after history a record of that which came to the Israelites when they set up gods who were not deliverers, in place of Him? Some people say that that history is not authentic. If you and I take it to be authentic, we ought to act as if it were. Then we must hold that the people of Israel fell continually into slavery because they forsook the Deliverer, because they worshipped things in heaven and earth, and ascribed to them the passions of tyrants and slave-makers, or slaveholders. And if we take the Prophets to be inspired teachers, we must suppose that every plague and pestilence which visited their land was a call to turn from the slave-making, slaveholding, destroying gods, to the Deliverer, the God of salvation: a call to put their trust in Him whom they had ceased to trust. That is the broad, simple language which they addressed, not to a portion of the people, but to the whole of them; not to the good, but to the evil. The sin of one and all was distrust in the true God, the righteous God, the God of salvation—was the

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acknowledgment of false gods, unrighteous gods, gods of damnation. The pestilence came to a self-indulgent, slavish, cowardly people. Their impulse was to bow before it as a dread fate, or else to try if it was not possible to propitiate the tyrant who had taken vengeance for some slight to his altars, some contempt to his priests. Against such propitiations, against all such calculations, the Prophets lifted up their voices. It was the religion which the God of righteousness hated; it was the religion from which He called His people to turn away. He called on them to abandon their refuges of lies, and trust in Him, the God of Truth; to desert the service of death for the service of the Author and Preserver of life, the Enemy of death.

Yes! the Enemy of Death. If we accept the language of the Old Testament literally—if we do not explain it away to suit our rationalizing fancies—we must regard the words of Hosea, which we read in Passion Week, as expressing the Divine purpose: "*I will be thy plague, O death; O grave, I will be thy torment.*" We must read the whole Bible as the record of the fulfilment of this purpose; as the warfare of the Creator with the Destroyer, of Life with Death. The instincts of men in all countries have recog-

11.] CHOLERA, AND DISEASES IN GENERAL. 19

nized such a warfare ; only the recognition has been imperfect and confused. Manichæism has mingled with it. The Destroyer has been partly a Creator ; a portion of the living universe must be referred to him. Once give him a portion, and to all intents and purposes you confess him as supreme. Death is the palpable ruler ; all appear to be his servants. If you cannot defy him and utterly deny his rights, his dominion will be regarded as the highest ; only certain feeble, insecure privileges will be reserved for the protectors of life. Such is the unbelief—what we call the superstition—of the heathen world : taking very various forms ; more fixed and radical in some places and ages than in others—nowhere without striking and mighty witnesses against it.

Your call and office is to bring *the* witness which sustains and interprets all these—which shows how true they are and how weak they are—which declares once for all that Life and Death have tried their strength against each other, and that Life has prevailed. If you have courage to bear that witness as a divine—if it comes clear and full from your lips—all your work as a physician will corroborate it. The more resolutely you strive against plague and pestilence, the more you testify, not for the God

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of the whites, of the Franks, or of Englishmen, but for the God of the whole earth; the more effectually you can represent every plague and pestilence as a call to cast away the god of death, the destroyer, and to trust in Him. Then there will be no *arrière pensée* towards Jesuit or mediæval miracles, no wish that you could imitate them. You will perceive that they were *not* witnesses for the God of life, only witnesses for a God of power, who could set aside His laws for the purpose of proving certain men to be His servants. If the power of destruction is more startling to men's senses than the power of life, the miracle worker will exercise that. Very commonly it *will* be more startling. To curse, will strike the poor idolater as more like the Divine agency which he expected, than to bless. At all events, the blessing will be capricious, irregular; the sign of a changeable God, not of a permanent, eternal God. It will be, therefore, no sign of such a God as the Bible speaks of; rather of such as it denounces.

But if your acts as a physician, and your words as a divine, have that correspondence with each other which I have supposed—then, though you feign to work no miracles as a proof that you can disturb the order of God's universe, you have all

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those acts of Christ which we call miracles as tokens of what that order is. You will be able to appeal to His healing of the palsied man, of the deaf, of the blind, as the Son's discovery, in His own works, of the works and will of the Father who sent Him. You will speak of them as examples in a few cases of what He is doing every day and hour for the restoration of health, for the preservation of life ; of what He will do when He shall have put all enemies under His feet. The power of His resurrection will therefore be as substantive and practical a part of your preaching as it was of St. Paul's. You will argue about it as little as he did. You will proclaim it as a gospel to those who have been all their lifetime in bondage to the fear of death, that he who has the power of death—that is, the Devil—has been vanquished.

You will return—you have returned I doubt not—to this mode of speaking, to this literal acceptance of the Divine record, not heeding or fearing those who may laugh at you for adopting an old fiction about the Devil ; seeing that you know, from what you see and from what you feel, from the experience of heathens and your own, that it is not a fiction ; that there is a spirit who is a murderer and a liar ; that he would lead you as

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well as them captive at his will. You are not afraid to speak so, for any fault that your scientific friends may find with you ; for you know that you are on their side, whether they think so or not. It is the worship of the spirit of lies which hinders men from recognizing facts of one kind or another ; from desiring to understand the truth about any law of Nature, about any of the relations in which human beings stand to each other. Men of science groan under the opposition of this spirit. But they have no arms wherewith to contend against him ; they try to grin at him, and he grins much more securely at them. In the name of the eternal God, in the name of the Son of God, who died and rose again from the dead, you can mock him in his high places ; you can invite your heathen brethren to arise and cast off his fetters, to take their places as men, as sons of God ; not to fear sickness, but by all the wisdom which the God of life imparts, to labour for health ; not to fear death, but to cleave mightily to Him who has died and been buried and descended into hell, and has risen again the third day.

And now am I wrong in saying, even if I had not a Bishop's authority for the assertion, that we may learn our duty from you, that you can show us what our perils are, that you can help to

II.] CHOLERA, AND DISEASES IN GENERAL. 23

convert us at home as well as the idolaters who are about you ? The principle which the Bishop has laid down is one of the widest application. At present I would only apply it to the subject which is pressing on us at this moment, to the one which was prominent in his speech. If the Cholera should come, shall we again fall into an utter contradiction between our Sunday and our week-day habits of thinking and acting ? Shall it be the office of the priest to awaken terrors which it is the office of the physician to allay ? Shall the first imitate his predecessors who offered incense to Baal, and taught the people to tremble before an unknown power which may torment them for their crimes ? Shall it be left to the second to imitate the Jewish Prophet, and say, " Trust, for the power of life is meant to vanquish the power of death ? " Shall not the preacher of Christ's Gospel call men everywhere, pharisees and publicans, saints and harlots, to repent of having distrusted God, and of having revered the Evil Spirit as being stronger than He ? Shall we pretend that we think disease and death very pretty and pleasant, when we know that we hate them, and that every one does hate, and ought to hate them ? Shall we not say, " They are hateful to us ;

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they are hateful to God. But they may be turned into His ministers, if they drive us to seek Him and believe in Him, and utterly to renounce the service and faith of His enemy. He is Lord of all; they are obliged to work for Him. The Spirit of Lies is compelled to see his own vassals desert him. Plagues and pestilences lead to moral effort, to physical purification. Terrible wars punish money-worship, and extinguish slavery. Verily, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Satan shall be bruised under Christ's feet."—I am faithfully yours, &c.

LETTER III.

THE SALVATION OF THE SOUL.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Startling as the assertion of the Bishop of Oxford was, that we in Christian England have reached such a state of theological confusion, that we may at last come to worship the Evil Spirit instead of God, I contended that his language was not exaggerated; that every one of us had need to reflect deeply and earnestly upon it, and to ask himself where the danger lies, how he may escape it, how he may help his brethren to escape it. You, I thought, were reminded directly of that conflict which we are wont to forget, or to describe by specious names very unfaithfully representing its nature. You know that you are failing altogether, unless you can raise men from the worship of dark powers, unless you can bring them to believe in a God of light in whom is no darkness at all. You, therefore, may be our best instructors at this time.

If we can in any degree strengthen your hands, you may much more effectually clear our minds respecting the meaning of the message with which we are entrusted, of the foe which we must encounter.

I have given you one instance of our perplexities, and of the way in which you may show us the way out of them. The question of bodily health and disease, which is forcing itself upon us practically at every moment, demands a theological, as well as a medical treatment. What is that treatment? How are we to speak of the plagues which come near our dwellings? Are we to use them as arguments of terror, or as arguments for trust? You would answer, "If we are to bear witness for the faith of Christendom against the devil-worship of the heathen world, we dare not use them as arguments for fear, we are bound to use them as arguments for trust. We must declare that the God whom we serve is the God of health, the Enemy of sickness and death." It is the broadest and most obvious illustration of the great doctrine which the Bishop enunciated; if we will reflect on it, we may at once turn his warning to practical account.

But we have a ready excuse for making that use of the Cholera, and similar visitations, which

you would deem the heathen or Antichristian use. We say that the weal of the body must always be subordinate to the weal of the soul ; that if any calamity affords us an opportunity of awakening in men a desire for the salvation of the soul, we are guilty of a great sin when we neglect that opportunity. "Who has a right to set the mortal part above the immortal, to care for that which is doomed to perish in a few years, when that is at stake which is to last for ever and ever ?"

The truth which is latent in this language ought not to be forgotten, whatever confusion may be in it. But since theological indistinctness, and an indifference to the great articles of faith, are the crimes which the Bishop of Oxford specially imputes to our time, I cannot overlook the remarkable instance of both which these popular pleas for the soul supply. Is the body, then, to perish in a few years ? Is it not to live for ever ? What, then, becomes of the words, "I believe in the Resurrection of the Body ?" What becomes of that fifteenth chapter of the Corinthians with which we console the mourners beside every grave ? People would be utterly shocked if they were supposed to deny this doctrine ; and yet they do deny it habitually. They make a religion of

denying it. They represent three-score years and ten as the limit of life in the body ; they contrast it with something else which is to last on for ever.

This cannot be the way of stating the difference between that which we design to exalt and that we design to depress, if the Gospel is true ; this must be a heathen conception of the difference. But, heathen or not, we all feel that there is a vast difference between the senses and the physical energies which we have in common with other animals and that which belongs to us as men. Both may be destined to life. The argument of Butler for continuance applies equally to each were there no higher testimony on the subject. But clearly the life in one and the other cannot be the same ; there must be a profound sense in the language—whether adopted by modern preachers or ancient philosophers—which sets the soul's life above the animal life. The phraseology may not be scriptural, may even be curiously the reverse of scriptural. But that it should have been accepted so generally by divines who are most conversant with Scripture, and who have intended to do the Scriptures honour, is a reason why we should not cast it aside until we have extracted the full virtue out of it, nor then unless we can exchange it for some better language.

Doddridge and other excellent men have traced a process which they describe as the rise and progress of religion in the soul. The man is startled out of a dream of unconsciousness. He begins to ask who he is, whence he came, whither he is going. No doubt you may say that such a man is occupied about his soul. He will easily adopt your phraseology. He is occupied about something which may have that name or any other you like to give it. He knows that that which puzzles and torments him is *himself*. He is an awful being; he is not like the birds and beasts about him. What, then, is he? Must not the answer be given by some one above him—some one who knows him? He is sure that it must. He has heard often that his Maker has spoken to men, has revealed Himself to them, has told them they were wandering from Him, has bidden them arise and come to him. He now accepts the tidings as true. They answer to that which has been stirring in him. He has been sought, and he has been found. He confesses that it is even so. He begins, in the strictest sense, to *believe* in One who is about his bed and his board, and is spying out his ways. The power at which he trembled becomes the object of his confidence. His life is altogether

a different life from that of the body—that of the animal. For a time he is disposed to scorn that; it looks so mean in comparison. By degrees he feels that the higher life ought to make, that it does make, the lower far more intelligible, far more beautiful, far more sacred. But they must never be confused. He may not be able to discover the right way of distinguishing them. The New Testament tells him the way. It tells him that there is a life of God, an eternal life, which was with the Father, and which Christ has manifested to us. To possess this, cannot be the privilege of the animal nature. It must be for the *man* who was made in God's image.

Am I, being a man, really created for this knowledge, for this enjoyment? And may I not *lose* this knowledge, this enjoyment? Am I not every moment in danger of losing it? Are not my fellow-creatures in the like danger? Have not I been—are not most men—even ignorant that there is such a life as this, quite indifferent about possessing it? Behind the vision of this eternal life, there rises the vision of an eternal death. It is the dark terrible background to all that looks so glorious, so satisfying to the yearnings of a human being. Apprehensions of it, likenesses of it, have evidently haunted all ages, all coun-

tries. But the full sense of it, the complete terror of it, is reserved for those on whom the fullest light has dawned. Till the man knows a little of his own capacity for good, he has no dream of his capacity for evil. Then there ascends out of the deepest caverns of his spirit the cry to be delivered out of the bitter pains of eternal death.

But to WHOM does the cry ascend? Is it to the Author of the eternal death? Will *he* raise any creature out of it? Or is it to the Author, the Revealer of the eternal life? to Him who has manifested that life in His only begotten Son, that men might know it, and have the bliss of it? This, my friend, is the question of English divinity at the present day. The vagueness, the theological indistinctness which is over us, gathers about this point. It is not the question whether there is an eternal death. It is whether God the Creator has devised and prepared that eternal death for his creatures. Or whether we may say of this, as of the other death, He is the Redeemer from it; He is the Author of life—only of life.

Here, again, we may appeal to you—we may ask you to teach us again some of the earliest lessons of our childhood. The godfather and

godmother, at baptism, in the name of the child, renounce the Devil and all his works. They verily declare that the Devil is not the lord and master of that infant; that he has no claim or right whatsoever over it; that it has been redeemed by its true Father, for His service. The words have become to us as an idle tale. Some of us tremble to speak them; some do not tremble, because they seem such an unmeaning formula. You know what it is for men to acknowledge an evil spirit as their lord and master, and the lord and master of their children. You know what it is for men to tremble before such a power, which is plotting their destruction here and hereafter; which they must try to conciliate, if they can, by offerings and sacrifices, or by the intercession of milder deities, who may have a favour to some of them. Unless you can tell those to whom you speak, that there is a Father, who has created them and all mankind; that there is a Son, who has redeemed them and all mankind; that there is a Spirit of goodness and truth, who is stronger than the Spirit of evil and falsehood; you must hold your tongue; you cannot preach the Gospel which you have been sent to preach. But if you can do this, there can be no parleying for you

with the question whether God means the death of any man; whether He is the author of death to the body or the spirit of any whom He has formed. You must proclaim Him simply, broadly, absolutely, as the God of salvation—as the God who has sent His Son into the world for the very purpose of saving us out of all death, of bringing us to the highest life of which He has made us capable. Trust, entire trust in Him, is the right state for body and spirit. But the spirit exercises the trust; the body only receives the blessing of it in the freedom of all its powers and energies.

These lessons, I say, we want at home; you must help us in recovering them. If we do, we shall regain all that was vital and fervent in the teachings of those who have dwelt most on the salvation of the soul; we shall escape that morbid habit of poring over the conditions of the soul; the coldness which follows the excitement of hope and fear respecting it; the hypocrisy, the infidelity which is the consequence of that reaction. The words of the Psalmist, "*Say it my soul I am thy salvation.*" will come forth with ever new force to the man who is struggling to rise out of his own greatness and despondency. And yet he will understand St. Paul's contempt for the mere *spiritual* man, his sympathy with the *spiritual* man.

Each of us is prone to be soulish ; to be shut up in himself. Is not that what the Devil would have us be ? To be entirely shut up in self, is not this the deepest damnation ? To be spiritual men, to seek that which is above us, to drink in the life which is for all—is not this the blessing to which God invites us, is not this His salvation ?

The habit of self-contemplation which our language about the soul is so apt to foster, is one of which you would warn us, knowing to what superstitions, to what dark and cruel contrivances of mortification, of so-called purification, it has led Yogis and Dervishes. But if by the Soul is meant the organ of thought, you would say to us as earnestly, “ This must be awakened : we must call upon God to awaken it, for we cannot. To make men *think*—oh ! how hard this is ! ” Yes ! my friend, you pray to the living God that He will enable heathens to think, that He will break the bonds which hinder them from thinking. Only when they begin to think freely, can they renounce the Devil’s service and enter upon His. And what a lesson is that for us ! We have learnt to connect free-thinking with Atheism ! We warn our sons against free-thinking ! I am well persuaded that we must one and all, laymen and priests, repent of this language, and of the temper which

it expresses. Unless we have much more free-thinking in our land than we have now or ever had, I fear we shall sink into Devil-worshippers: unless the clergy cultivate free-thought, instead of checking it, they will become the Devil's ministers, and not God's.—Ever yours, &c.

LETTER IV.

FREE-THINKING.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—What I said about free-thinking at the end of my last letter will scandalize many persons whom I should grieve to scandalize. But I dare not suppress it ; for their sakes I dare not. For the sake of all the truths, which I am pledged by my vows as an English clergyman to contend for, I dare not. That the freest thought should be supposed to be atheistical thought ; that it should be the habit of our time to identify one with the other ; that the most religious people should adopt the opinion, and take every opportunity of endorsing it : this appears to me the most frightful example of theological indistinctness which can be imagined. It must *terminate* in that confusion which the Bishop of Oxford predicts as the result of theological indistinctness. Does it not *begin* in that confusion ? Is not a secret suspicion that God is

the Evil Spirit, at the root of the notion that if men were freer to think they would set Him at defiance?

"But is not the natural heart at enmity with God? Does not the Bible say so?" Undoubtedly it does. And the same Bible not only says, but testifies by its whole history, that the natural heart is prone to slavery: that men, if they follow their own inclinations, sink of course into slaves. Because there is this tendency in men, and they know and feel that there is, they have recognized any who have won freedom for them—and who in winning it had to struggle with all kinds of opposition from those whom they benefited—as sent by some gods, as having the surest Divine credentials. The Bible says that *the* God, the God of gods, the King of kings, is the author of freedom: that men murmur and rebel against Him because they prefer bondage: that all the acts of His providence and government are to overcome that preference, to give them an appetite and zeal for the freedom wherewith He makes them free.

That external freedom is the result of internal freedom: that the first is sure to perish, where the second has been lost: that a man may be free when he is in chains because his thoughts are

free : these are sayings which we have all repeated. We have supposed that in repeating them we were showing our reverence for the benefactors of the earth, for the martyrs of God. We have associated this freedom with faith ; we have said that men could defy visible terrors because they could find their refuge in an unseen Helper. But now it seems a point of religion that we should cast this language aside, that we should adopt a habit of mind which makes it worse than unmeaning. The maxims which we are to learn are these :—
“ Be afraid of thinking. Close your minds under bolts and bars. Else this result is inevitable : you will cease to believe.” The feeling that freedom of thought and unbelief are inseparable, that one must generate the other is becoming more and more fixed in those who are at war on all other points. A man who denies Christianity may be told by his religious friends that he is in great peril, that he is trifling with his immortal soul ; but they at once concede to him that he has claimed a freedom to think which they dare not exercise. They implore him to put on the fetters which they wear. Such fetters, he is told, are only painful at first—custom makes them easy.

O damnable doctrine, preached in our pulpits,

preached in our market-places, leading indeed to the perdition of men's souls, producing all the worldliness of thought and practice which religious men profess to hate and abjure, blighting all that is strong, hopeful, faithful, in young men, establishing some of them in the conviction that all thought of unseen things must be unreal, settling others in an impenetrable hypocrisy! Yes! we have here the doctrine of Devils, which has darkened the doctrine of the Son of God in all parts and in all ages of Christendom, which has substituted a heartless acquiescence for a living faith, which every reformer who has sought to restore faith has found, and will ever find, the huge dead-weight that is opposing him. Thanks be to the Almighty God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for every instrument which He has called forth to deliver the church and mankind from this intolerable load. We talk of the French infidelity of the last century as if we supposed that Voltaire and Diderot were men who conquered God. Such blasphemy may be reasonable enough in those who do not believe that God is, who suppose that He is a fiction of priests. We who hold that He is, that He lives, that He has reigned, and does reign, and will reign for ever, must confess that these men

were, consciously or unconsciously, willingly or unwillingly, doing His work. They existed to prove that He is not a fiction of the priests, since whatever is that trembles and shrinks away, and confesses by shrinking its own mortality; since the canon of the inspired writer will always make itself good—"Things which can be shaken are taken away, that those which cannot be shaken may remain." If we do not fully accept that assertion, if we do not apply it to every part of history, we evade the testimony of Scripture, we do not confess the kingdom of God. If we do accept it, we must hold that all emancipation of thought, just so far as it has gone, has been good; that its only fault has been that it has not gone far enough. Our complaint should be that the sceptic has not dared boldly enough to face the problems of his own life, and of the world's life, and to demand a solution of them; that he has been too soon contented with the lazy, cowardly conclusion that they are insoluble; that he therefore lounges and falls asleep in his carriage, and takes all things as they come, when no such condition as this can be right for a creature which looks before and after; that he compliments himself too soon on his freedom, whilst he is still wearing shackles which the custom of the

time, or the tradition of the past, or the custom of his own mind, has fastened on him. Every way he has taken out of mere expediency is a way for which he and we should be thankful. Every thing which has been stirred within him is a sign that there is something better for him than to sit and brood and die. But any self-justification upon this score, any boasting of the things which make him restless, is unworthy, unreasonable, ridiculous. It is excusable as against us, since we have led him to expect anything better than the repose to which we have tempted him. It is not excusable as against himself: it is inconsistent with his professions, unworthy of his mission.

What then ought we to do? Here, too, you must be our teacher. Whatever form of heathenism you have to deal with, the more rude or the more civilized, this problem will surely encounter you. That you should awaken suspicions about old traditions, about existing customs and modes of worship, is the necessity of your position. You can fulfil no one task for which you were sent out if you do not stir some thought, if you do not kin the life where death has been. How this should be done, is the question which you have to ask yourself continually. That you *may* be the

means of producing a mere habit of scepticism—a mere distrust of what is not true, without any belief in that which is—you must be quite aware. You faced that peril when you took your office upon you. You were not ignorant that the mere contact with Western civilization, with a people trained in the notions and habits of modern science, involved a great disturbance in the minds of men brought up in the notions which the natives of any idolatrous country count sacred. You hoped that you might render the movement which this collision makes inevitable less tremendous, that you might give the soul that had become empty, swept, and garnished, something to fill the niches from which the old images had departed. You hoped this. Has it proved a vain hope? Sometimes you will think so; sometimes you will fancy that you have only aggravated the mischief which you might have alleviated, which you might even have cured. But you will be least tormented by this suspicion, or you will find the only refuge from it, when you say, “My judgment is with my God. It is He who is making these men impatient of their fetters. If the fetters are not broken He will not be in any of their thoughts; the dark spirit who strives against Him will be in all of them. I will tell

them that freedom of thought comes from His inspiration ; that He will not leave them to the slumber, ruffled by fantastic dreams, which they choose ; that He calls them to light and liberty ; that if they feel any craving for these, they may know Who has put it within them, and Who can satisfy it."

Such lessons from you could not strike the supporters of missionary enterprises in Europe as strange. The enterprises must be abandoned if these lessons are not lawful, or if they are to be kept back from any idolater or any Mussulman. And are we not to learn them ? Are they not for the people of England and the clergy of England ? Merciful God ! art Thou then gone away wholly into the lands of the people who do not know Thee ? Are we, the people of Thy pasture, because we have Bibles and creeds and preachers, left without Thy presence ? When our young men become perplexed with questionings about the wonders of Thy universe and the mysteries of their own being, are we, the ministers of Thy Word, to tell them Thou art crushing and silencing their perplexities and desires for light ? Are we to bid them, in Thy name, choose death rather than life ? Are we not to tell them that Thy Word is with them, and

that He will teach them Thy fear and Thy worship, so that they shall not learn what Thou art by our precept, but by thine own revelation? Wilt Thou not cause the teachers of Thy people to believe, as Apostles, Prophets, and Reformers believed, that it is Satan who enslaves, and Thou who makest free? I know, my friend, you will join with me in the prayer for England and her colonies, and for all whom she can guide by her word or her example, that they may learn thus to understand the purposes of their enemy and of their Friend.—Ever yours, &c.

LETTER V.

FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I said in my last letter that we should encourage men to desire much more freedom of thought than they ever desired ; that we should rebuke them only for being content with so little. The name of free-thinker, therefore, is one which we should honour in any one who claims it for himself : we should dispute his right to monopolize it. There is another claim which we listen to with more seeming respect, often with much concealed impatience and suspicion. When any one says that he is entitled to perfect freedom of conscience, we are apt to answer, “ Oh, yes ! and you have it, as much as you can possibly require. Are you exposed to any penalties for your profession of belief, even of unbelief ? Do not our laws protect all alike ? Are not the greater part of the offices and privileges of the State open to all ? Liberty of conscience, indeed !

A very good phrase at elections ; but when it is used in private conversation, it is commonly meant to disguise an incredulity which the speaker does not care to profess."

Now here is theological indistinctness in a very aggravated form. In the first place, if we attach any meaning to the word Conscience, if it stands for anything in our minds, how can the removal of outward restraints from it constitute its freedom ? That there should not be such restraints is, doubtless, an unspeakable good ; that the power of inducing my neighbour to lie, by motives of fear or hope, should be taken from me, is good for him, and still better for me. But his conscience may be still imprisoned, though I cannot imprison his body. If there is a conscience at all in him, its prison-house *must* be of a different kind from that which confines his limbs. He may be able to use those without the least check, and yet may be writhing in fetters. Surely men who read their Bibles, who read even ordinary religious books, should know this. And yet it is they who continually obliterate this distinction, who actually teach men that they ought to be well satisfied if the hangman and the policeman let them alone.

But, secondly : How *can* the claim for liberty of conscience be a claim for the privilege of being

indifferent? It is the strongest assertion of a dreadful duty *not* to be indifferent. Acquiescence in a popular opinion is the obvious, easy, course for every man. The indifferent man at once drops into it—why should he do otherwise? The man who speaks of his conscience alleges that he dares not acquiesce, that indifference is for him a dangerous, an impossible state. He appeals from the decisions of his fellow-creatures to a higher judgment throne, by whatever name he may describe that throne, whoever he may suppose to be seated upon it.

“Well, but if he should say that there is no one seated upon it, that he is his own judge?” A very dreadful opinion—alas! a very possible one. Men may say this: men do say it. Who have taught them to say it? who have led them to suppose that Christians adopt the saying as a true one? My friend, the confession must be made: we have done this. We have not recognized the cry for liberty of conscience as a genuine divine cry: as a cry to Him who has inspired it: as the cry of a spirit which feels that it cannot be tied and bound by rules which we have imposed upon it: that it has an unseen Ruler, whom it must feel after till it finds Him. That cry of the strong summer in his agony we have

mocked ; we have treated it as presumptuous ; we have bade the sufferer think that he is left to himself, that there is no one at hand to help him. He has taken us at our word. He has said, "Then I am alone. The waves are too mighty for me. I will strive as long as I can. It is your teaching that I must sink at last."

Oh ! we know not what we have been doing whilst we have thus trifled with a precious form of speech which is sealed with the blood of the noblest patriots the world or the church has ever had ; whilst we have been complimenting ourselves on the wit and cleverness with which we have exhibited it as a mere political platitude or a trick of unbelief. We know not what we have been doing. For we *must* in pulpits talk about the conscience ; we must try to stir the consciences of our hearers ; we must speak of the deliverance of the conscience from a heavy burden. Those pulpit words and those week-day words seem as if they had some relation to each other. We are careful to tell others and to tell ourselves that they have none. The conscience which the man speaks of, and for which he claims freedom, is not the conscience we have to do with. What is it, then ? Are we only talking technical divinity ? Are we not speaking to human beings in their

own dialect? Is all our preaching a mere scheme for calling forth a something which is not? Are we to lay bare the tricks and deceptions of the heart—to bring it face to face with the Searcher of the heart—or to cheat it with an ambiguous phraseology, which must make all the webs that it weaves for itself a thousandfold more intricate and hopeless?

The reaction on ourselves is fearful. We, too, divide our Sunday from our week-day conscience; the last is often the simpler and honester of the two. Yet we complain, and with reason, that the week-day conscience of the religious shopkeeper or politician is not what we should have expected from his Sunday professions. We make abortive attempts to restore the connexion. Must it not first be fully restored in us! Must we not listen to the warnings of the Bishop and ask whether we have not been confounding the true Lord with the Spirit of lies; whether our duplicity about the conscience has not its root in this duplicity? Has not each of us heard One saying to him, "*Behold I stand at the door and knock.*" Is He not a friend who seeks to set us free from the impostures to which we have yielded? Has not each of us heard another voice, one which bids him despair of such

an emancipation, which tells him that the only safety is in fresh and more cunning impostures to support those which have proved ineffectual? Here is the very mystery of Conscience—that which justifies all that has ever been said of its grandeur, all that has ever been said of its defilement. If we know something of that mystery of the conscience, if we are conscious of the presence of One whose still small voice can make us tremble more than all thunders and earthquakes—conscious of the presence of one who would stop our ears to that voice, who would drown it in the world's noises, we can speak, it should be always with fear and trembling, to our fellow-men of that which is passing in them. We can now and then arouse them by our words to perceive the facts of their life, which theories about the conscience try feebly to represent. We can always assure them that the power is not in our words, but in that Word who is nigh to the heart at all times when no mortal lips can speak to the ear. But if we do this we are bound to respect all recognitions of this truth which come forth in any form, even in the forms which are most affronting to us, even in the form of apparent defiance to our statements. The assertion of any man that he cannot follow our teaching because

there is a conscience within him which demands a higher and more satisfactory teaching should be revered by us. We know that he does want better and more satisfactory teaching than ours. As the ministers of God, we should earnestly tell him that he has it. Any cry for freedom of conscience, though it means freedom from our opinions and judgments, must be sacred in our ears. The man who utters this cry may discover hereafter that he has need of a more complete emancipation—an emancipation from his own judgments and opinions as well as ours. But let us honour what has been given him. God is teaching him secretly and by degrees that there is a Spirit which would guide him from opinions into truth. Let us not mar the effect of that Divine education by our hasty and blundering discouragement. Let us confess with our hearts what we say with our lips in church, and let us, if we can, confess it to each man with our lips, that we believe in this Spirit of truth, that He is a guide for us and for him. Let us tell him that the Spirit of truth is also the Spirit of liberty, the Deliverer of the conscience from its bondage. And when we speak of the seeds of slavery which are continually springing up in his heart and in ours, let us affirm fear-

lessly and constantly, "The enemy hath done this."

My friend, though it may seem strange that you who dwell amidst so much darkness should be able to instruct us who boast of so much light, yet I do believe that, about this twilight of the conscience, no experience will be more profitable than yours. As to that question of outward restraints, of State penalties, it is impossible that you can fall into the mistake of identifying the absence of these with freedom of the conscience. You know in what bondage the consciences of heathens may be when they have been brought under the protection of a Government which has no motive to enforce by penalties any of the religious influences that are acting upon them, and yet, which is extremely cautious of interfering with those influences. You welcome the security which a civilized Power gives you by not *obliging* heathens to practise immoral superstitions, by prohibiting direct crimes against the peace of society. You believe that this security would be diminished, not increased, if the Government encouraged the natives to desert their old superstitions, precisely because you think such a course would tend to corrupt not to liberate their consciences. These are great steps in that wisdom which should

belong to the politician when he is brought into contact with the opinions of any class of men. Your theological lore, if you use it rightly, will as little interfere with the political lore, as with the medical. It may help the first as much as the second.

But then as to the deeper question—as to the way of freeing the conscience from those chains which the statesman cannot loosen, which he may often through overdoing help to rivet. Cannot you give us some counsel about this? You must perceive that neither the weight of a long tradition, nor the laziness of habit, could avail to sustain the numberless practices and notions which most enfeeble and debase the minds of those to whom you preach, if there was not in them a conscience of evil, the perpetual tormenting sense of something wrong, something that may expose them to the vengeance of a power which takes account of the wrong and will punish it. To this conscience of sin every priest and soothsayer practically addresses himself: if it were not there, he would prescribe as much in vain as the physician would prescribe remedies if there were no pain or sickness. All the multiplied devices for getting rid of the consequences which may follow the evil, as well as of the sense of

present pain which accompanies it—if possible of the remembrances of the past which haunt the ill-doer—all these of course assume that the evil itself cannot be uprooted, that that is incurable. And yet the very man who submits to this dismal conclusion, and tortures himself perpetually while he submits, has a conscience of a Good, of a Right, which is close to him, which he might lay hold of, which would raise him out of the evil whereby he is tied and bound. What have you gone out for but to speak to this conscience of Good, to bear witness that it has not told a false tale; that the Good of which it whispers has met with it, has come down to it, is on its right hand, that it might be delivered, not from the consequences of the evil, not from the pain of the evil, but from the evil itself: from that evil which is both past and present, and future, which has in it a permanent and eternal nature, which can only be shaken off by trust in the Eternal Good?

Yes, this is your Gospel, the Gospel of Him who took our nature, that He might redeem us from all iniquity: the Gospel of Him in whom all are commanded to trust, that they may be found in Him not having their own righteousness, but that which is of God *upon* faith.* If you can only

* Phil. c. iii. v. 9 : *ἐν τῇ πίστει.*

recognize a conscience of evil in any heathen or any Mussulman, all you can do is to provide him with new contrivances for escaping the punishment of his evil. And all those contrivances, derived from one scheme of Divinity or another, will make his conscience more slavish, more unclean. If you can recognize a conscience of good in him—if you have courage to address that, you will bring forth in him the sense of evil, the hatred of evil, as he never had it before: he will see that it is a foul thing, natural indeed to him, but never meant for him. He was created after God in righteousness and true holiness; the Son of Man is the Lord of him and of every man: owning Him as his Lord, he has the righteousness which makes him a true man.

Here surely is the secret which St. Paul was taught, of keeping a conscience void of offence before God and man. Here is that freedom of conscience to which all feel that they have a right, and which we have discouraged them from demanding. The Bishop of Oxford has told us why we have discouraged them. We are losing the distinction between God the source of good and the Spirit who would drag us into all evil.—Yours, &c.

LETTER VI.

FREEDOM OF THE WILL.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Free-thinking we are wont utterly to denounce ; freedom of conscience is at least a suspicious phrase ; but the freedom of the Will it is respectable, even orthodox, to defend. Arminians charge Calvinists with impugning it : Calvinists are, in general, anxious to repel the imputation. They do not, they say, reject free-will in any sense which implies that a man is not responsible for his actions, and will not be punished if his actions are bad.

The history of the debate on this subject is curious. The most vehement assertors of free-will in the century when opinions about it most affected practical life in Great Britain, were the defenders of the Royal prerogative ; the champions of political liberty denounced Arminians as its foes. They perceived in their doctrine precisely that demand for subjection to mere visible

authority against which they protested in the Papist. If we consider that paradox, we obtain much light upon the circumstances of that period; I believe, also, upon the relation of theology to politics in all periods.

Practically, the defenders of the hierarchy in the sixteenth century were maintaining this thesis—that God had transferred His government to certain ecclesiastical rulers, and that He only interfered from time to time by miracles to prove that they had the power which they claimed for themselves, and to punish those who resisted them. The Reformers affirmed that God was the Lord still, as He had ever been; that He was ruling on His own earth; that He was then breaking asunder the bonds by which His people were bound, as much as He had broken the bonds of the Israelites when they were making bricks for Pharaoh's treasure-houses. This belief lay at the root of the Reformation—I might say it *was* the Reformation. It was seen that the Old Testament did not speak only or chiefly of material fetters: the slavery of the Israelites was in their hearts and wills; they longed for the Egyptian flesh-pots; they chose captivity. None could have rescued them from the outward tyrant but He who was the Master both

of Pharaoh and of them ; none but He could have overcome that more terrible inward slavery. The Reformers read this in the sacred history ; they felt it in themselves. A hundred princes, German or English, might have risen against the Pope ; but if his material power were broken—if he was shut up in the Castle of St. Angelo, not for a few days, but perpetually—would their spirits be the freer from the yoke which he had put upon them ? No ! men's wills, left to themselves, must always have some oppressor or other. The unseen oppressor will always have some new instrument ready to do his work ; if there were none, he would be himself their master. If any became free indeed—if any could serve the true God in truth, *He* must have emancipated wills which were naturally enslaved.

These are the maxims of Luther's famous work against Erasmus. They are imbedded, no doubt, in many angry and violent phrases, such as may be expected in all controversy, and which do not become better when they are rendered into the less honest, not less cruel, dialect of our century. And these same maxims, passing from metaphysical theology into politics, made the Calvinist, even more than the Lutheran, so powerful an ally of civil liberty in Scotland, Holland, Eng-

land ; if it may not be rather said—as Hume has said—that he gave civil liberty its impulse and direction. For *this* Calvinism involved no miserable waiting for some angel to go down and trouble the waters. The waters were troubled. God, not an angel, had troubled them. He had come down to fight with His enemies. He invited men to fight with Him. Wee to those who joined the opposing host ; though according to the judgment of mortal eyes, it was ten thousand times stronger !

And then came the doctors with their explanation of this mystery of the Divine and human will, and the action of one upon the other. An explanation how ingenious, how logical, how miserable !—one which must take the form of an apology for God : an attempt to show why certain wills were enfranchised, and certain wills were left in bondage. Out of this attempt springs the dogmatic or school Calvinism. By it the Divine will is resolved into mere sovereignty : the human will becomes no will at all. The old Calvinists, who knew that this could not be the explanation—*that* it was not an explanation to their own hearts, or to their nation—struggled hard against this logical necessity. Knox is furious against the opponents who dared to rebel him and his friends by saying that they made sovereignty, and

not righteousness, the ground of the Divine predestination.

The protest was sincere ; it came forth in act. Knox defied sovereignty for the sake of righteousness. A Mary Stuart, or a Charles IX., or a Philip II., clothed with infinite power, would not have approached nearer to his idea of God—would have represented exactly his idea of a supreme Devil. And men who bowed before such a being because they thought he must conquer, would have exactly fulfilled his idea of the apostate world, the apostate Christendom, from which he exhorted God's elect people in Scotland to come forth and be separate. He asserted, therefore, a will in God, which was the very *reverse* of a mere sovereign will ; he appealed to a will in man which was the very *reverse* of a mere nature only capable of being moved by some violent force. The Arminian school, nevertheless, could prove satisfactorily that the Calvinists had in their arguments, often in their very words, reduced each will to this negative condition. In Holland the Calvinists answered the demonstration by imprisonments, confiscations, deaths : so confirming the charge which they intended to silence ; proving that it did faithfully express their purpose when they had power in their hands ;

that they did *then* proclaim God as a Tyrant Ruler, and the will of man as something which it was His pleasure only to annihilate or to torment. But Arminianism in England came to be in the ascendant; the king, who had cherished Calvinism as a dogma and as an assertion of the highest form of prerogative, found that, neither here nor in Scotland, was the confession of supreme authority in a living God favourable to the notion that that authority was transferred to him. He learnt from Laud that the champion of free-will was his most practical protector against the insolent notion that subjects might appeal from his tribunal to a higher one, or expect any reversal of the sentence which had gone forth from the inferior. *Such* a free-will the patriots in the House of Commons denounced as their worst foe; unless there was a Will in the Heavens which could set right human doings, which might be invoked when human government was utterly perverse and monstrous, they felt that they and that England must despair.

But they triumphed. Calvinism had here also the trial of success, and again all its darker features began to show themselves. Then came the great champion of Necessity, who provoked and confounded Calvinists and Arminians equally.

Hobbes hated the first with a thorough hatred, because they had overthrown State decrees and its order in the name of a Divine will. He scorned the second for their inconclusive efforts to maintain a certain mysterious responsibility in men to a Power which, as they confessed by their acts and in their political theories, had delegated its functions to earthly magistrates. The Puritan and the High Churchman were equally tormented by the philosopher of Malmesbury; each saw some of his own feathers in the fatal dart which was striking him. In the next age, Butler perceived, with a keen and wise instinct, how only Hobbes could be encountered. He must be left in possession of his logical victory. On the ground of practice, in the actual battle of life, men confess themselves to be responsible voluntary creatures: a necessity is laid upon the Necessitarian to join in that acknowledgment. The disciple of Hobbes had no doubt maintained the adverse position upon a similar ground. The champion of free-will, he said, in the act of vindicating it, confesses a motive, and so a necessity, by which he is bound. There is something comical in this interchange of phrases and arguments. Each disputant must have a sense of humour when he

mounts his opponent's theory, and, as in village donkey races, wins by being hindmost. But the comedy is confined to the *statement* of the fact; deep tragedy lies in the fact itself. When the disputant on either side is driven from books to life, he must become serious. The disciple of Butler could rest in no dogmatic security. He had committed himself to the trial of battle. He might be compelled in the midst of the fight to change rapiers with his opponent. In Butler's day many a man had this experience. The Methodist preaching was in one sense a passionate proclamation of free-will. All were asked to come to the waters and drink, to believe and be saved. In another sense it was a passionate proclamation that only God could convert the will, that till He converted it the will must be tied and bound. Nothing was more natural or reasonable than that the Methodist leaders should divide on this issue; that a vehement, not a dry scholastic, Arminianism should grow up under the hands of Wesley, an equally vehement, an equally unscholastic, Calvinism under the hands of Whitfield. Each was the complement of the other. The dogmatists of each school might be furious against its opponents, might deem them worthy of being consigned to outer darkness. Yet

neither could have existed without the other ; and the dogmatism of each, except as it had the very grave effect of producing bitterness and ill-will, was of the slightest possible significance. The American Edwards stood on a different ground. His arguments occupy an important place in the theological and political history of his country. But in England the speculation may be almost overlooked : the practical controversy was of the greatest interest. The *action* of Free-will and of Predestination might be seen in crowds of the poorest and the richest people ; the interpretation of that action which proceeded from the partisans of one or the other, was confessed to be inadequate by those who clung to it most eagerly.

And, therefore, what remains to us when the excitement of the battle is over ? I am afraid the Bishop of Oxford has told us the truth in this case also. There is no longer on either side the dread of a mighty Enemy who is seeking to enslave the will, no longer the cry to a mightier Friend to deliver the will. As long as this dread lasted, as this cry was raised, no amount of perplexity or confusion about terms could involve a hopeless moral confusion. The moment of pacification is the dangerous moment. Then there is much pleasant embracing. The Arminian

agrees to admit just so much of necessity as may limit the power of the divine will to save fallen spirits. The Calvinist admits just so much of free-will as may account for the refusal of the majority of men to embrace the Gospel. So we have sermons—probably some of the cleverest delivered in English pulpits—which are occupied with proving how men disable themselves from believing the divine message by the indulgence of evil habits: sermons full of undoubted truth, yet which, thus barely stated, must drive us all to despair. For to which of us does it not apply? Which of us is not in continual peril of hardening his heart against belief, of strengthening his will against the discovery of its perversion? What men are more prone to do this than we who are conversant with all the phrases and dogmas of religion, who are continually speaking of them to our fellows? It is all true; but is there no voice to tell us how that natural downward progress may be arrested, no one to speak of a Power mightier than that, which is drawing us upward? Oh, yes, there are such: men who proclaim that the grace of God is sufficient for all things, able to blot out all transgressions, to create a clean heart and a right spirit in the most evil. Beautiful tidings! how one longs to accept them in

their length and breadth. No ! that may not be. The *believer* knows that this is so ; he has this blessed experience of the power of God's grace. The poor unbeliever is utterly cast off from it. Sermons of this kind, sometimes, no doubt, mere repetitions of phrases that have been learnt by rote from books or living teachers, but sometimes full of the genuine experience of the speaker's own heart, testifying of what he has known—are heard in English churches. They might be a help to numbers in all states of mental darkness, of moral debasement, were it not for this frightful limitation, this huge practical contradiction. The grace of God is made not the ground of man's belief, but dependent upon it. Trust in God's righteousness was that which raised men at the Reformation out of trust in their own doings. They owned that they were good for nothing, and they must therefore cling to Him who was good for everything. Now the belief that they are good for nothing, that He is good for everything, is to be an excuse for self-glorification, a reason for saying, "We are not as other men are !" O strange subtlety of the Evil Spirit,—what Arminian or Calvinistical dogmas are a protection against him ? What but an entire belief in that Will which has overcome

him and made a mockery of him? Does not every true Arminian, every true Calvinist, confess, "To that Will I must betake myself, because it is almighty to save; because my will, whether I call myself believer or unbeliever, Christian or heathen, must become the victim of the evil will, unless there is a Will that all should be saved, that all should come to the knowledge of the truth."

How far the denial of this truth has gone—the truth I mean either of God's Will, or of His power to raise wills or spirits out of their bondage to sin and death—I think none of us know. I could quote passages from Episcopal sermons, from Episcopal charges, which to all appearance make the fall of Adam, or the depravity of man, an insurmountable obstacle to the triumph of the divine will; supposing, I mean, it is such a will to save as the Scripture affirms it to be. I have seen other sermons and charges in which it appeared to be treated as a bold assumption of man's reason to say of this will what the Bible does say of it in express words: a daring impiety to suppose that the prayer for such a will to prevail can be answered. But I have no wish to fix so bad a meaning upon the authors of these passages. I rejoice to believe that they would disclaim it: my only object, if I

produced them, would be to show how far the theological indistinctness which the Bishop of Oxford laments has penetrated, how near we all are to the confusion which he so rightly deems the most horrible of all. And that object may be far better accomplished if each one of us is stirred up to observe this indistinctness in himself, to resolve in God's strength that he will not bear with it, to ask that the contrast between God and Satan may stand out before him with something of the clearness in which it will appear when the darkness is past, and we are brought into Christ's full daylight. I know in myself—I think you must know in yourself—how great the temptation is to make the resistance of other men's wills, still more the resistance of our own will, to that which we feel and confess to be the right will, an argument for the impotence of this, and for the transcendent power of that which defies it. Who can charge this unbelief upon another? Who is not often mastered by it, when he is flattering himself most that all is well with him, when he is fullest of indignation against his neighbour's incredulity? But it is unbelief, the essential, radical unbelief. If we succumb to it, all is over with us: our work is a lie, our existence is a lie.

If this habit of mind, which has so nearly got

possession of us, is not shaken off, your occupation, my dear friend, is gone. Let us state the question fairly to ourselves. You are dealing with wills, with spirits, not with stones or animals. These wills or spirits are not free. It is idle to pretend that they are. They are fast bound in misery and iron. Has their Creator so bound them? Does He wish them so to be bound? Can He break their bonds asunder? When you find the answers to these questions share them with us! We cannot live unless we know them. I have not written to you about the freedom of the will because I wished to renew a dreary, interminable discussion: I have written of it because the whole subject of CONVERSION, abroad and at home, all that is most practical in your business and ours, is involved in it. That subject will occupy us in the next letter.—Faithfully yours, &c.

LETTER VII.

CONVERSION.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—You have gone out to convert idolaters or Mahometans. Here in England we are taught that it is our duty to aim at the conversion of profligates, of infidels, of Jews. A majority of English churchmen say that it would be very desirable to convert Roman Catholics; not a few try to convert members of different Protestant sects, who, as they express it, have separated themselves from our fold. The most devout men and women amongst ourselves say that there is a large body of unconverted people, who are neither Jews nor Romanists, nor profligates, whose conduct is correct, who observe punctually all the outward services of religion, who are zealous against outward infidelity, who dislike Dissenters. They may be staunch churchmen, they may be clergymen, they may be high ecclesiastics. These men, it is said, are in danger of

their souls like the others ; it is our duty to labour for their conversion.

When we hear these different applications of the word, we are forced to ask ourselves, "Has it the same sense in all of them? Or is it an ambiguous, deceitful word, which takes its shape and colour from each new subject which it touches?" The first and last uses of the phrase are those which seem to stand out in the most glaring contrast to each other. The difference between them is urgently insisted on by moderate men. "You did not mean that the worthy squire and parson of our parish, if they are a little worldly, need conversion of the same kind as one who accepts the Vedas or the Koran? Such a notion is extravagant and mischievous." Generally, a person who had expressed a strong opinion that the squire and the parson in question are unconverted, gives way to the objection. "No, he did not mean to go that length. Conversion from any form of false religion to Christianity must, he thinks, be different in kind from the conversion of one who has been baptized and brought up as a Christian to a better life." Well, then, is the conversion of these respectable men the same thing with the conversion of a murderer? There will be more hesitation in the answer to this

question ; but probably it will ultimately be conceded that there is a difference in this case also. There may be a little awkward attempt to maintain that the difference is in degree and not in kind ; after a little pressing that refinement will be abandoned as unpractical.

Neither of these concessions would have been made by a fervent Wesleyan of the last age ; they would be resisted by many young preachers in the Church of England, as well as among the Dissenters, now. For they would not only feel that the word was in peril of losing all its force through a series of explanations and qualifications ; they would also recollect that the case of conversion which is most prominent in the New Testament—the one to which we instinctively refer for an illustration of the divine significance of conversion—was not the case of a profligate, or of one who rejected the faith of his country ; but of one who, as touching the righteousness of the law, was blameless, who was zealous without measure for the traditions of his fathers. Must Saul of Tarsus then be given up as that example of God's ways to all disobedient and rebellious men, which he told his son Timothy that he was ?

There are some to whom such a question

would offer little difficulty. They would say, "St. Paul's conversion was of course an exceptional event. It has been recognized as such by all writers on the miracles of the apostolical age. No one has reason to expect in these days that a light should shine on him from Heaven, that he should hear the voice of Jesus, that he should be blind for three days, that an Ananias should be sent to lay his hands on him and bid him arise and be baptized. These are strange incidents, the signs of an apostolical vocation, the preparation for a great and unusual work."

Be it so: all this is ordinarily taken for granted, rightly taken for granted. The incident did belong to a particular man and a particular time. Men who have attached most importance to the outward incidents of their own conversions, have not supposed that those of the Apostle were repeated for them. Those who have studied the Apostle's reports of his conversion, and his Epistles, have been most disposed to dwell on the internal change, the change of mind and purpose, which caused the great wonder to him. But it is so much the more remarkable—the strangeness of his case being admitted, being even insisted on by Christian writers—that we should all have turned to this conversion as a typical

one, by which the origin, nature, and effects of every conversion might be tested. There was that first obvious characteristic of Saul's history to which I have already alluded—that his morals were exemplary, his religious sect the straitest, his zeal the most fervent *for* that which appeared to him his country's orthodoxy, *against* a heresy which, as he thought, would break down all barriers between the true faith and the heathenism of the world. Such observations furnished the evangelical preacher with a variety of appeals to the consciences of those who were going about to establish a righteousness of their own, and were not seeking to be clothed with the perfect righteousness of Christ. Yet in a tract written by an accomplished Scotch layman of the evangelical school, I read very recently an application of St. Paul's story to the case of a man who had been suddenly aroused from a course of depravity and dishonesty and had become a zealous preacher. The *principle* of conversion set forth in the journey to Damascus struck this layman—who was certainly not a careless student of Scripture—as illustrated by the change in a man utterly unlike the Apostle in all his propensities and outward conduct. Again, strange as it might appear to connect so passionate a champion

of religion with unbelief, we have that cause assigned by the Apostle for his persecution of the Nazarenes—assigned not to aggravate, but to qualify the guilt of it: “I did it in ignorance and unbelief.”

Every believer in Jesus, I suppose, whose mind is much occupied about the conversion of the Jews, individually or nationally, turns to the record of the conversion of this Hebrew of the Hebrews as the great warrant for his hopes. And every one who is engaged in your work will recollect the words in which St. Paul speaks of God being pleased to manifest His Son in him, that he might preach Him among the Gentiles. It may seem an anticlimax to pass from these cases to those special uses of the word Conversion which have prevailed among Romanists when they have spoken of secular men or women as converted to the monastic or religious life; or to the special use of it among Protestants when they speak of bringing Romanists to their faith; but it would be easy to show that the first draw their precedents scarcely more from later saints than from him who counted all things but loss that he might win Christ; and that the second habitually quote him as the grand and original example of deliverance from traditions and will-

worship. So that we may affirm boldly that all the most apparently inconsistent applications of the word Conversion are, by the consent of the parties who make them, referred to this as to a test or standard. All—however they may differ from each other—confess that the idea of conversion universally can be best deduced from this particular instance.

Those who recognize, as I do, a divine instinct in this strange unanimity, will carefully consider what we are told of Saul's conversion by the person who knew most about it, and then will ask themselves whether his statement does not interpret and reconcile the partial views which have distracted us. I cannot say that the result will be in all respects satisfactory. I do not pretend that it may not lay bare some hollow-nesses in our hearts which we should be glad to hide ; but the office of every preacher of repentance and conversion is to exalt vallies and level hills. If that effect should be produced on any of us, we shall have another test of the soundness of our method.

1. To say that St. Paul speaks of his conversion as the direct work of God may sound like a dreary commonplace. But it is a commonplace which may be worthy of serious reflection. For

have we not an undefined suspicion that this was one of the circumstances which make his case unlike any that occur in our age? Are we not inclined to express ourselves somewhat in this way:—"Oh, of course, ultimately all influences on men's minds are from God; but here was a case of direct divine interference." Why do we consider it so? Is it, then, the visible light, or the apparition, which we suppose converted Saul? Were not these the *signs* of the work which took place in him—the tokens to him that the unseen God was stopping him in his course? We do not surely attribute to them the work itself? We do not mean that the power which restrained him or changed him was in them? Our answer must be distinct—"Yes," or "No." Loose phrases, such as "Not quite that," "Not that altogether," are insincere and bewildering. If we say "Yes," I will tell you what we shall do, supposing we care for the condition of our fellow-men. We shall despair of obtaining *such* sights and sounds as we imagine were effectual on the mind of St. Paul, but we shall aim at producing some tolerable imitation of them.* We shall try to

* I need scarcely remind my readers of the excellent description of a revival meeting in Mrs. Stowe's *Dred*.

surround those whom we wish to convert with some startling scenery, with some influences that may alarm them. We shall depend somewhat on powerful rhetoric ; much on a machinery which may affect the nerves, especially of women. All these will occur to us as a reasonable approximation to the kind of agency before which Saul bowed. But if we think clearly and distinctly within ourselves thus: "Saul bowed to the voice of the living God speaking to him—not to his eyes, but to *him*. Saul's will surrendered itself at last to the Will of his Creator—to the Will which had been sustaining him, and was sustaining every creature:" then you will begin to understand his account of his experience both before and after that crisis in his history ; then you will see why he could testify so simply, so frankly, that the power which had been exerted over him was a power to which all Jews and all heathens might surrender themselves, because it was indeed the power of their Creator, of their God. And then, instead of considering it as a commonplace that God was the converter of Saul, and half doubting whether you must not therefore wait till some startling incident, some light from Heaven, crosses you—you will feel that this is precisely the point of contact between his life and yours ; that the

eternal God is now as then holding converse with the spirits of men; that any circumstance which affects the body of any man, or his condition in the world, is just as really God's reminder to him of a Presence which he has forgotten, as the light which shone upon Saul's road to Damascus; that not the circumstance, but that *He* converts men as of old. These are no doubt anything but novelties; they have been repeated to weariness in pulpits and in books of devotion. But if we thought of them, if we believed them, they would surely be often mighty helps to ourselves, great witnesses to us of our relations to our fellow-men, a great warning to us against the notion that any contrivances of ours to create a sense of the Divine Presence can bring it nearer to men than it is at every instant of their lives. To tell them that it is nigh and not afar off—to tell them Who would convert them, and from what—this must be surely our task; the more simply it is performed, the more it will resemble his teaching who, without pomp or wisdom of words, delivered his testimony to the divine work and will.

2. And his testimony was this, about others and about himself—that God converts *from darkness to light, from the dominion of Satan to His dominion.*

We cannot, I suspect, better this language. It faithfully represents what had passed and he knew had passed, within him. All his thoughts of God were of a dark being, of a being who was plotting destruction against his creatures generally, who only meant to spare Jews, and among Jews only such as were faithful and resolute in maintaining the barriers that separated them from other men and in putting down all traitors within the camp. This dark being Saul worshipped. And there came to him a revelation that this was *not* the God who had said to Abraham, "In thee and thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed;" not the God who had said, "I am He that brought thee out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have none other gods but Me." The God whom Saul worshipped had chosen the seed of Abraham to be a curse to all the families of the earth. The God whom Saul worshipped had not delivered him out of bondage at all. He was in bitter bondage. The very law which he was fighting for held him in bondage. It frowned at him, it cursed him. It said, "Thou shalt not covet," and it aroused in him all manner of concupiscence. And yet David and the Prophets had delighted in this law of God: they had meditated on it day and night. Saul was certainly

not owning their God. And now the God of light burst upon this darkness. The Deliverer was there. The Friend of all the families of the earth was there. He was at war with Saul, for Saul hated the families of the earth. He was at war with Saul, for Saul was glorifying the Self which was his prison-house and curse, that from which only the true God could set him free. Slowly perhaps—for centuries may be crowded into such moments as these—the vision of a Father of his spirit—a Father of the spirits of all flesh—rose on him out of the night in which he had dwelt. The Lawgiver was not seeking to destroy him for his breaches of the law : He was delivering him from that spirit of covetousness which the law denounced, but which it could not overcome ; He was giving him His own spirit that he might fulfil the law.

There is much more to be said of Saul's conversion ; but if we take in thus much, have we not advanced some way towards a discovery of a sense which will be available for all times and for all men ? The man who was full of religious zeal and orthodoxy needed to be brought from the service of a dark God—in plain terms, of Satan the Adversary, the Spirit of Evil—to God. Does not every one, be he ever so religious or so

orthodox, in our days—if he is worshipping a dark God, a God in whom he cannot *believe*, cannot trust—need conversion? And is not this the tendency of us all? Does not our evil nature drop easily into the acknowledgment of such a God? Do we not fall into it just as Saul fell into it? First, we contemplate the families of the earth as lying outside of the church under a terrible doom; then we see the church itself exhibiting the ugliest spectacles to the world, and begin to ask how many of its members in any section of it can be saved; then finally, the sense of tremendous ghastly evil in that region which is known to each man appals him and makes him think that God cannot have worse designs against any heathen or Christian than against him. By what services, penances, zeal in putting down the wicked, can that sentence be averted? Such a state of mind must be horrible to any whom it overtakes. Whom may it not overtake? Who has not been—nay, is not—on the edge of it? If any one of us has been, at some time or other, awakened to a belief that God is an object of trust, One who can be loved: if that time was like a new creation—the evening and the morning of a first day; the recollection may be joyful, all the accompanying incidents of it may be worthy to

be treasured for ever; but can it be worth anything if it is *merely* a recollection, merely a date in our existence? Was it not the opening of a Heaven, in which the God who is the same yesterday to-day and for ever, abides? Was it not the revelation of His purpose, His mind, to us, when we felt ourselves the least worthy in His universe? Was it not, therefore, the revelation of what He is to all others as well as to us?

Surely it was thus that St. Paul contemplated his conversion. It was a past event, but it was the revealing of a God who is always present. It was to him, but it was to him that he might say to his own countrymen and all the outcasts of the world, "What God is to me, that and no other, He is to you." It is my mind the sight of the unchangeable brightness was directed to him, as he was to him it was other—the intellectual and moral vision was lighted with the truth—the knowledge that the Gospel was true in the remembrance of his journey to Damascus and in the remembrance of the God who saved the dead.

And so for the first time a world of truth was revealed to him, and he was able to say to his countrymen and to all the outcasts of the world, "What God is to me, that and no other, He is to you." It is my mind the sight of the unchangeable brightness was directed to him, as he was to him it was other—the intellectual and moral vision was lighted with the truth—the knowledge that the Gospel was true in the remembrance of his journey to Damascus and in the remembrance of the God who saved the dead.

of a God like himself, good-natured, tolerant of evil, so kind as to let us destroy ourselves and our neighbours without any interference, a feeble magistrate, a murderously indulgent parent. Then suddenly the features of this amiable being are changed. Under the pressure of sickness, or of some sudden calamity, he assumes the most ferocious aspect. The wrath of God—such wrath as he feels against some one who has cheated him at play, or whom he has cheated—seems settled on him. If on such a man the light breaks, if the true countenance of God shines forth—if a love which punishes the evil-doer that he may be raised out of his evil-doing, extinguishes the dream of a mercy which permits him to ruin his own soul and body, and all that are dear to him—if a burning divine wrath against that which makes us and the world wretched drives out that Devil's wrath which he had imputed to his Creator, to his Father—is this a conversion of a different kind from the other? In root and principle are they not identical?

Once more : If a man is brought out of atheism, or out of any vague conception of some power which may be malevolent or benevolent, or either by turns—which at all events is little troubled

about the world, and scarcely at all about him one of its atoms—to the acknowledgment of such a God as St. Paul believed in, a God whose will is that all should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, who works in the hearts of those who confess Him that they may will what he wills and may be His instruments in effecting the highest deliverance for His creatures—wherein does this conversion differ from either of the others? What wisdom or profit is there in using harder words towards him whom we call an unbeliever, than towards him whom we call our fellow-Christian? Is not unbelief the fault of both? Is not the ground of belief, the name and will of a God who invites belief by making His own righteousness and faithfulness manifest to us?

But there is another lesson from Saul's conversion. If we follow his account of it we certainly never can describe it as the exchange of one religion for another. He did not cease to be a Jew when he heard the voice which said, "Why persecutest thou me?" He had never been truly a Jew till then. It was then he began to sympathize with the Patriarchs and Prophets of his land: it was then he entered into their calling: it was then he learnt to worship the God

whom they worshipped. If, therefore, we take Saul's conversion as our guide to the scriptural or divine meaning of conversion, we never can identify it with proselytism from one opinion to another. We may desire to convert a Roman Catholic from Satan to God, just as we desire to convert a Protestant from Satan to God ; but we must not desire to convert him from his opinions to our opinions. We may desire to convert a Jew from darkness to light, from Satan to God ; but we must not desire to convert him from his opinions to our opinions. Saul was a proselytizer *before* his conversion. He belonged to the school which compassed sea and land to make a proselyte, and which made him twofold more a child of hell than themselves. Those are dreadful words. They were not spoken by one who was passionate or ignorant ; they were spoken by One whose words do not pass away. You and I have equal need to remember them.

“But how can I remember them,” you may ask, “if I go forth to convert men who are heathens into Christians ?” That is a subject which I shall consider in my next letter. It will bring forth another side of Saul's history : it will introduce another topic in the Bishop's speech. In the meantime, I would beseech you seriously

to examine what I have said in the light of your own experience. You are living amidst English colonists, as well as heathens and Mussulmans. Are you not often troubled to know which need conversion most? Do you not feel at once the great blessing of the higher ideas of justice and truth which the colonist brings with him, and the curse which accompanies the discovery that he has the same propensities as the idolaters, and that those propensities often attain as complete a dominion over him? And then the passions of the different sects and schools which undertake to spread the Gospel of the West according to their different schemes—how are you to explain these to your catechumens or to yourself? The riddle is an awful one. But its very hopelessness drives you to the old Scripture solution. The dialect of St. Paul is the only one you can adopt; every other must break down with you. From darkness to light, from Satan to God: no other description will avail you but this. It makes your message an equally blessed one to Europeans and to natives, to the baptized and the unbaptized. You take away nothing from the first: you remind them of all the lessons which they were taught in their infancy, of the God who adopted them to be His

children. You bid them turn to the God with whose name they are sealed. You bid them bear witness that He is the God of all, the God of the earth, of the people whom they are mixing and trading with. You say that this God is always living, always acting upon all His creatures, always seeking to bring them into His family. And that message will be the most cheering to you in your own heart as well as in your work. Oh ! the joy to read again the 23rd Psalm, as if it told us of an actual Shepherd who does not convert His sheep once out of their wanderings, but is continually bringing them back into the path of righteousness for His name's sake ! If it is the privilege of the heathen and the unbeliever to be converted, and if the Christian or the believer may hug himself with delight because there is no more conversion for him, how much better is the portion of the former than of the latter ! May you, my friend, learn more and more that God's converting mercies to us and to mankind are new every morning. What boots it to ask how far we have erred and strayed ? If our life is in trust, if our home is with God, we can be right only when we are trusting, we can have rest only in Him. Those who teach others must know better than any how little they have trusted,

how restless they have been. They must know better than any how often truth in the inward parts has been exchanged for secret insincerities, tamperings with conscience, trifling with God. Is it not written, "If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things?" And is not that a message of comfort, a message of salvation? What should we do if we were left to our hearts and their condemnation? What so good as to be able, at every moment, to say, believing that there is One who hears, "Search me, O Lord, and try my heart, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." If the "we" of the Confession is said by the clergyman for his flock, and not with them, it must soon become an equal mockery to both. If, in our acts of worship, we do not turn to the God of all goodness, because He is turning us to Him, we shall turn in those acts to the Power of Evil: they will help to fix us in his service.—Ever yours, &c.

LETTER VIII.

CHRIST AND ANTICHRIST.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—That Saul was not converted *from* the faith of a Jew I have said already ; most people, I suppose, who believe his words and reverence the Old Testament, will agree with me. But was he not converted *to* the faith of a Christian ? Let us understand the question, and not be deceived by customary forms of speech.

Of course neither Saul nor any Pharisee would have allowed the name of Christians to the Nazarenes. Was not every Jew looking for the Christ—for the Son of David whom the Prophets had spoken of—for one who was to reign over the house of Israel, and before whom the nations were to bow down ? Was not the great sin of the Nazarenes, in Saul's eyes, that they degraded this expectation ; that they affirmed one to be the Christ who had no right to the name : one whom the leaders of the nation had

decided to be a blasphemer ; one whom they had deliberately given up to the Romans, for assuming to be a king? Saul did not deny a Christ at all ; he charged those whom he persecuted with denying the true Christ, and setting up a false Christ.

“Yes,” some one will say, “he expected a glorious Christ, when he ought to have acknowledged a suffering Christ.” What ! and did the vision on the way to Damascus lead him to abandon his faith in a glorious Christ? Was it not a vision of One who was glorified? Was it not the glory which blinded him? Surely his conception of the grandeur of the Messiah was not diminished by that appearance ; one would suppose, from his own statement, that it was immeasurably heightened.

“Still, he began with looking for a Christ to come ; he ended with confessing a Christ who had come.” Certainly he did not end with *ceasing* to look for a Christ who was to be manifested hereafter. He describes himself as looking for and hasting to that manifestation. The expectation of it was his one comfort under all his troubles. He bade the churches entertain it habitually ; nothing else, he assured them, would suffice for their comfort.

Was there then no change, no radical change in his belief on this subject? The most radical change that one can imagine: a change in his whole conception of the nature of the Christ, and of His relation to human beings: no less a change than this, that he discovered Him whom he had accounted the Antichrist to be his Lord and Master, the Son of God with power; that he discovered the image of a Christ which he had framed for himself to have the features of the Antichrist. Such a mental revolution is indeed one which is worthy to be called a conversion. Let us study it in the Apostle; and then see whether, in this respect also, he may not interpret all later conversions.

Saul could never hesitate about *this* question, Do we want a *King*? Evidently that was the want which all the Prophets had expressed. Evidently the assurance which had cheered them was that they had a King, and that He would one day be manifested. So far, Saul going to Damascus with the High Priest's commission, and Paul preaching at Athens, were of the same mind. But *what* King would fulfil the wants which the Prophets had expressed? *what* King did they own as the true one? of *what* King did they desire the appearance? *Here* is the critical de-

mand. Saul saw a Cæsar reigning over the world. That was, it seemed, the highest throne on which a man could sit. But it was in Rome ; the King ought to be in Jerusalem. The Cæsar treated the chosen people as a portion of one of his most insignificant provinces. Jehovah intended them to rule over the nations. The Christ, His Messiah, would come to give them that ascendancy. The nations would be broken in pieces before Him ; the house of David would reign under Him gloriously.

How much, how very much even of *this* vision was to be accomplished, St. Paul saw afterwards. The language of the old seers he found did not require to be emasculated by the interpretations or the allegories of the Elders ; it was far truer in its literal form than they were. Was their anticipation—that which is expressed in their words taken literally—*this*, that a King, like the Kings of Assyria or Babylon, a King who ruled over the nations as they ruled, should be established in Judæa ? Was not the hope of the Prophets that all *such* tyranny should be utterly trampled down and beaten small under the feet of the Christ ? Was the difference to be in the *place* of government, or in the *nature* of the government ? in the persons favoured or crushed, or in the fact that

all the subjects would be treated with equal mercy and justice? This was the blessing which Israel was to confer on the world. Out of it was to come the righteous Ruler, the just and gracious King; such a King as might be, and was, the desire of all nations groaning under an accursed and devilish despotism. Now Saul did, to all intents and purposes, look for a Christ who should, in His inward character, in His moral purposes, be the counterpart of the Babylonian ruler. If a Tiberius, or a Nero, had been established in the city of David, instead of the city of Romulus—if he had deserted the temple of the Capitoline Jove for the temple which Solomon dedicated—if he had put down the *flamines*, and exalted the sons of Aaron into their places—if the sacrifices prescribed in the pontifical books were exchanged for those prescribed in the Book of Leviticus—if the chief priests and elders were consulted in any emergency instead of the augurs—that would have been the revolution which answered to the dreams of Saul's imagination. The transference of power from the Latin to the Hebrew—the capacity of avenging and destroying wrested from the one, conferred on the other—this was the object which the fervid youth, in whom were embodied and concentrated the long-

ings of his sect and of the religious rulers of his land, hoped for, lived for, was ready to kill and to die for. The person who should accomplish this object would be his Christ.

And now consider the revolution which was effected in his own mind, and which he anticipated in the universe. The Apostles in Jerusalem had never for a moment altered their language. St. Peter had said, at the day of Pentecost, "The Jesus whom you have crucified is the King the Son of David's throne. He is exalted to reign over the house of Israel." They had foretold a great and terrible day which was approaching the house of Israel. Stephen had spoken so much more distinctly of this day, that his accusers affirmed he had blasphemed the temple and the law, and declared that Jesus would come and abolish both. Stephen showed that he had such a sense of the grandeur of the law and of the temple as he had, for he did not conceal his belief that his countrymen had denied the King the Son of David, and perpetrated a murder in Him. That they had rejected the King Jesus, as the ancient Jews had done: that they had rejected the law by the day of sin of angels, and had rejected Him the Jesus the Son of David, the King of glory and glory, whom they had

condemned as guilty of blasphemy, was at the right hand of God—was the concluding provocation which they could not bear, which led Saul to be specially eager for his death.

And now he accepts the proclamation of the Apostles in the length and breadth of it: "We have crucified our King. Jesus is the Christ. He is at the right hand of God." How was such a revolution effected? We have the explanation from St. Paul himself. "*It pleased God,*" he says, "*to reveal His Son in me.* I had thought of a King afar off, a King who should descend some day in splendour to take His throne in some ancient palace of the city which should be prepared for Him. And lo! the King is here; the Lord of my heart and reins, claiming my trust, my submission. I have been fighting against Him; He has been fighting against me. There, in the innermost region of my being, has this battle gone on. And against whom have I been fighting? Is it against an Enemy or a Friend, a Judge or a Deliverer? Or must He not be both? Can He be my Friend if He is not the Enemy of this evil which He has found out in me? Can He be my Deliverer if he is not the Judge between me and that which is holding me captive? I have been persecuting a certain set

of poor heretics ; I have been hating them, and hating my kind. So doing, I have been persecuting Him ; because He is the Friend of these heretics, the Friend of my kind."

Now I think all the records of conversions in Christian countries which have the strongest impress of veracity, answer strictly to this description. The man or woman reports—not in such clear words as St. Paul, with many bewilderments it may be, arising from sensible impressions—how at some time or other he or she became aware of the presence of an unseen Judge or Ruler of the thoughts and intents of the heart, of One who had a right to know them—of One whose claims had been resisted. That He should permit His child, after all this resistance, to turn to Him, to trust Him ; that He should promise to guide it and be its Shepherd : this the penitent recognizes as the wonderful proof of His graciousness and forgiveness. And as this sense of graciousness and forgiveness comes distinctly home to any, the recollection of ungracious and unforgiving acts, of ungracious, unforgiving thoughts, becomes especially afflicting and appalling. These must have been especially hateful in His sight ; there must be a root of bitterness in the hearts from which

these have proceeded. There must be a Spirit of enmity and selfishness to which the man has yielded subjection. If we are His subjects, will He not plant us on another root? Will he not deliver us from that Evil Spirit, and give us His own Spirit? Those who are brought, in a Christian country, to a conviction of this kind, feel that they are then really recognizing the faith of their fathers. They are confessing Jesus to be the Christ. They had not doubted that there was a Jesus who is written of in the Gospels: they had often been haunted by the vision of a Christ. A companion, wiser, better, at all events stronger than themselves, some man of the age, some figure rising out of the past in the likeness which he presented to affectionate contemporaries, or which is detected under the reproaches and scorn of his enemies, becomes for a time their Messiah. Often these honours may be divided among many: often the image may be changed, as the habits of the child give place to those of the youth, of the youth to the mature man; often the chambers of imagery may be almost unfurnished; at last a skeleton of covetousness, malignity, hypocrisy, may inhabit and possess them. There were in all the previous Christs some of the shadows which have settled into this one.

There was a light which foretold that there must be somewhere a perfect light,—one which shines, not on this or that clever or refined or fortunate man, but on men. The belief that Jesus, the friend of publicans and sinners, the stern foe of hypocrites, the deliverer from death and hell, is the Christ, may for a while create an indifference to those lower forms of beauty and grace which have been ineffectual to protect us from our tempters and oppressors. Ultimately, if that belief prevails and penetrates the spirit, every dear companion, every saint and hero of the days that are past, will be owned as having received grace from the fulness of His grace, light from His fountain of light. To withhold reverence from them, will be regarded as irreverence to Him. Whatever in them marred or defiled His likeness, will be hated as proceeding from the Spirit which He vanquished, and which He will utterly cast out.

But what has this Christ, the Christ who was revealed in Saul, to do with that Christ who, as he had believed, was to enfranchise his nation and to subdue the Gentiles? We may make artificial distinctions between an inward Christ and an historical Christ, a Christ for ourselves and an Christ for the world—so destroying both: he

could make none. Who was it that the Prophets expected would overcome the Babylonian tyranny, the Babylonian idolatry? Who was it that would appear to redeem the people whom He was punishing for their revolted and disobedient hearts, for their love of the Babylonian tyranny, the Babylonian idolatry? Who was it that would make them the head of the heathen, would enable them to fulfil the covenant with Abraham, would cause a law to go forth from Jacob that would rule the nations? Was it not the Word who came to the Prophets, who spoke by them? Was He not that King who was always with them, whom they were continually resisting, who came forth from time to time out of His place that they might confess His presence and turn themselves to Him? Strange, mystical words these,—puzzling and incomprehensible to Saul whilst he pored over the Book in which he thought he should find eternal life: hard to reconcile with his notions of that Christ who was to be; and yet ever and anon pressing upon him with a painful, terrific sense of their power and reality. And now this Word, this Son of God, was actually revealed in him! It was not the dream of a distant possible future: He was near, He was at hand. The Prophets had not dealt in fantastic

allegories ; they had spoken the thing as it was. This mystery was the mystery of his life, of his nation's life. The King over him was that King whose goings forth had been from old, from everlasting. The people whom He had chosen to be the witnesses of Him to all the families of the earth had, as Stephen said, resisted Him as an enemy, resisted Him in every just man who had spoken to them in His name, had now at last condemned Him, the Just One, when He had spoken to them in His Father's name.

Had He been defeated because He had been crucified ? St. Paul perceived that that was the hour of His victory ; that then the Jewish tyrant and the Roman tyrant were shown to be weaker than the victim : the greatest powers which men could put forth in opposition to love feebler than the power of love. That which was stronger than the malice which could inflict death, he believed had been proved to be stronger than death itself. The Resurrection (as Mr. Herman Merivale has remarked in the beautiful essay of which a visit to Malta has supplied the text,) became the habitual subject of St. Paul's preaching, although no man dwelt less on the evidence derived from miracles as interruptions of the order of the universe. The Resurrection for him

was *not* an interruption of its order, but an assertion of its order. Death was the disturber. The living Word took the flesh and blood of men that He might vindicate the order of creation, and overcome that which all men felt and knew to be its enemy.

One who had died the death of all men, One who had risen because death could not hold Him, such an one must be *the* Christ ; no other could answer to the name. But if He had died the death of all men, if He had conquered the death which holds all men, could He be proclaimed only as the Christ or King of the Jews ? Must He not be proclaimed as the Christ or King of all men ? It was not by a laboured process of reasoning that St. Paul arrived at this conclusion. I left out the final words of the sentence which I quoted : “ It pleased God to reveal His Son in me, *that I might preach Him among the Gentiles.* ” He could not preach Christ among the Gentiles till He was revealed in him. Then what else had he to do ? The Lord of his heart and reins must be the Lord of every man’s heart and reins : if Jesus was his Lord, He was the Lord of every Gentile. Was not that the good news which the Jews were called out of all nations to tell all nations ? Was not this the way of putting down

idols, of putting down mortal tyranny? "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" was his cry. "Tell this truth to all nations," was the answer.

Sweet in the mouth, bitter in the belly, was that answer! It was a mighty Gospel with which he was entrusted: woe to him if he did not preach it! But if this was the Christ whom he had to preach to all nations, whither was his own nation hasting? What Christ were they confessing among themselves, were they preaching to the world? A Christ certainly; but a desire of nations? A friend and deliverer of the human race? Or exactly the reverse of this? Was it that they exalted the Judge above the Saviour? Alas! they were denying the Judge, their own Judge, Him who was at that moment separating the chaff from the wheat in them. Was it not certain that the one must be gathered into his barn, that the other must be burnt with fire unquenchable?

With bitter sorrow, a sorrow which at times was more than he could bear, Saul beheld that utter downfall which the chosen witnesses of the true King of men were preparing for themselves, by setting up a false king, a cruel king, a deified Cæsar, in His place. He could not charge them with any strange enormity; he knew how natural

was the conception of such a Christ, how he had been possessed by it, how incredible any other had seemed to him. His kinsmen after the flesh were but rushing on in the course in which he had been arrested, were but adding one and another feature to that image which he had worshipped. He could not condemn them, he could only conjure them, in the name of the God of Abraham, to turn from the false Christ to the true one; he could only look forward to a terrible day, a tremendous crisis which should reveal the two in their full and deadly conflict. He could not doubt that in the flames of his own city and temple, there would be that revelation. But neither could he doubt that the fall of that city and temple would be for the riches of the world; neither could he doubt that this blindness had only happened to his country for a time; that at last "all Israel would be saved." What divine help must he have needed to sustain him in such convictions! How continually he must have been tempted to despair for the world, for his country, for himself!

The Bishop of Oxford says that we are standing in the very same peril through which the Apostle passed; that the crisis which he saw as so near at hand in his day, is close to us in ours.

It is a fearful prediction, but I cannot dismiss it as an idle one. The more I dwell upon it, the more strong the evidence for it appears to me. I cannot gather comfort under it from the fact that in many past ages of the church the cry has gone forth, "There is the Antichrist." All these cries may have expressed a radically true, a divinely inspired conviction, though they may have rashly excluded and contradicted other convictions which were not less true; though they may have overlooked hindrances to the full manifestation of the Antichristian principle and power, which ought not to have been overlooked. Was Mahomet Antichrist? He might be an appointed witness for a faith which those who belonged to the church were setting at nought; he might be a useful and divine scourge of its idolatry. His followers might have a faith in a living God, a Ruler of nations, which the church had exchanged for the repetition of dead formulas. But so far as he represented God to be merely a Sovereign, so far as he undermined the idea that He is a Father of the human family, so far, I conceive, he was essentially Antichristian, so far he was laying the foundation of a tyranny more complete, more terrible, ultimately more opposed to all human progress and cultivation

than any which had existed in the world before it. Was the Pope Antichrist? He might, by his very name, be a witness *against* the glorification of mere sovereignty, *for* the existence of a universal fatherhood. But just so far as he represented himself to be the universal father, just so far as he claimed to be in himself the authorized substitute for the Divine presence and will amongst men, just so far the Reformers were not unjust in describing him as emphatically the Antichristian power, the subverter of the purpose for which the Son of God took flesh and died and rose and ascended to the right hand of God. Is any Cæsar of past or of later times the Antichrist? Any Cæsar in past times or in later times, on whom that title has been bestowed, may, like Sennacherib or Nebuchadnezzar, have had his commission to punish hypocritical nations, to purge the earth of some of its corruptions. But so far as there dwelt in him the Babylonian purpose of crushing the life of nations—the free thought, or conscience, or will of man—so far his intents were directly at war with the intents of Him whom we confess as the Christ. He may not have been *the* Antichrist: he had assuredly some of the characteristics which, when they are separated from all that is incon-

sistent with them, all that are of celestial origin, must form the Antichrist.

There is, then, no call upon us whatever to ascertain whether this prophet, or priest, or monarch has had, or has, most of these dark features which a prophet, or priest, or monarch, or some combination of all three, will at last present in their perfect malignity. There is the greatest call upon each of us to ask himself whether the Christ, to whom he is doing homage, is indeed a Son of Man? is indeed one who reveals a righteous Father to us? is indeed a King, whose purpose is to raise and regenerate, not to destroy our race?

I think that theological indistinctness or vagueness of which the Bishop of Oxford speaks, is never more conspicuous than when we use that name upon which the Lord's Prayer, and therefore all prayer, turns. The grand question upon which the difference between the faith of the Mahometan and of him who confesses Jesus to be the Son of God turns, is ever rising full upon us who send missionaries to convert Mahometans. Is God, to the great majority of men, really and truly a Father, or only a Sovereign? "Of course," we answer, "He is a Father, in a certain sense." Then in what sense? Is the certain sense an

actual sense, or an utterly unreal sense? Is it only that we do not think it quite comely to part with a venerable word, to acknowledge that we are teaching our children a mere form of words? Has this Father actually revealed Himself to men in a Son who is, as St. Paul said He was, "the Head of every man;" in whom, as St. Paul says, "all things were created, both things in heaven and things in earth?" When it pleased God to reveal His Son in Saul that he might preach Him among the Gentiles, was it not this discovery which burst upon him? Did he not learn that there *was* a real Father in heaven, who was claiming him, not formally, artificially, in a certain sense, but in the most radical sense of the word, as His child? and this that he might tell all men everywhere—"This Father hath sent forth His Son, born of a woman, that He might adopt *you* as His children?" Does St. Paul admit of the least severance between the truth—the fact—which was manifested to him, and the truth—the fact—of which he was to bear witness to Jew, Greek, barbarian, Scythian, bond and free? Is not the assumption of such a severance the destruction of his whole Gospel? And yet to make this severance is a capital part of our divinity! The man who perceives and confesses that God

is his Father, is taught to count *that* his distinction from his kind, not the ground of a message to his kind. God is his Father, because he is permitted to believe and know that he is his Father; if he did not believe it and know it, the truth, the fact, would be otherwise! He must teach his fellow-men that with them the truth, the fact, *is* otherwise. They may call Him Father—it is proper to do so; but the name does not denote an actual relation, only the semblance of one.

Such language was, I am sure, associated in the minds of those who first used it with a profound sense that to call God Father was the greatest and most amazing privilege of human beings. They knew how long they were in learning the worth and awfulness of the privilege, what a new life it was to them in any measure to lay hold of it. They heard numbers of men saying that a few drops of water sprinkled on the face of a child conferred the unspeakable gift; they were shocked that what was to them so inward, should be made dependent on an outward ceremony. A protest, a vehement protest, against the notions which had been associated with baptism in England and elsewhere, was, I am convinced, a divine necessity: without

it, our faith and our morality would have perished together. And though it seems to me that the reaction in our day in favour of the doctrine which some of the best men of the last age denounced, has also been a divine necessity,—a witness against that notion that belief creates the fact which is believed,—I dare not pretend that this reaction in itself is the least safe or trustworthy; or that the attempts to reconcile the opposing opinions have resulted in anything but a feeble compromise from which theological clearness and practical energy suffer equally. If the baptized church is not regarded as the witness to all the families of the earth of a truth; if it claims the privilege of being sons of God as one which appertains to itself because it is separated from all the families of the earth—the church must repeat in its own experience the experience of the Jews: it must set up another Christ than Jesus, a Christ who comes to deliver a certain set of men whom He favours and who choose to believe in Him; not a Christ who takes on Him the nature of man and dies for the sins of men. And the practical test and effect of this exaltation of another Christ is, that there ceases to be any acknowledgment of a real Father over the human race. The Mahometan Sovereign is all we can dream of. For though there may

be a few who claim the privilege of being His sons, that itself is in virtue of a mere decree, a mere act of sovereignty; so that essentially the God of the believer, as much as of the unbeliever, becomes a mere Allah; and I know not whether of such a Being Mahomet may not be the very best prophet.

But the demand for Fatherhood will remain deep in the hearts of human creatures after they have enthroned a mere arbitrary ruler in the highest Heaven. If there is no access to a Father in Heaven, an image or counterfeit of Him on earth will be sought after. Let no one wonder then if men, as much now as in former days—in Protestant countries more than in those to which the name is familiar and in which its weakness is made manifest—crave for such an image. The protest against it arose from the discovery that there *was* a way to another Father; that it had been blocked up; that it was still open for all who would seek it. But the father in Rome spoke of a universal kingdom: he said that the world owed him homage. The Reformers could only speak of a way *for those who would seek it*. They did indeed practically say much more, for they preached a Gospel to sinners; their very Calvinism forced them to say that God sought men who did not

seek Him. But as the limitation upon God's will and God's power has more and more been accepted by men of different schools—as the idea of a Sovereign for the world at large, of a Father only for the excepted few, has become the prevalent idea of Protestant divinity—the universality of the mortal fatherhood has come forth with an attraction by which a number have been overpowered, and for which they have confessed that *their* religion offered no substitute. In vain they have been told that the faith to which they are betaking themselves is an exclusive one; that it denounces all beyond the pale of the church as accursed; that it defines the church by the Popedom. They have declared that practically this system is less exclusive than the one which they desert for it; that both in space and time, both with reference to those who are in the world and those who have left the world, it is far more comprehensive. That Protestants should dread the advance of Popery when it is enforced with these arguments, addressed to some of the deepest necessities in man for which they have failed to provide, is reasonable. And *they* are equally reasonable in saying that the Popery which is accepted under such conditions will in general not be of a better, but of a far worse kind, than

that which prevailed in another day. The Pope as a dogmatist will be more simply a substitute to the conscience and the reason for a Divine Teacher ; the Pope as a father will stand far more practically between the worshipper and the Divine Father. I speak not of particular cases. There may be all possible modifications arising from circumstances ; in many cases the new faith may be a more genuine as well as a more charitable faith than that which it supersedes. But, in general, I conceive, the Protestant who betakes himself to the Papal system will do so because the invisible world has become either incredible to him, or an intensely painful object of contemplation ; because he wants something at once to suggest it to his imagination and to keep him from the perpetual terror of it. The vision of God is so vague and yet so tremendous, that he would be protected from it by intercessors and mediators, seen and unseen. The Virgin may have suggested, may still suggest, most blessed thoughts to a number of those who worship her of Divine grace and protection : God may come nigh to them in her as in any mother on whose knees they have been nursed. But she *may* become a mere form of tolerance and benignity to save the heart and conscience from the searching eye of

the Eternal Truth and Righteousness. Which she has been to any one in any past time, which she is to any one now, only that eye can discover. But I cannot conceal it from myself that our way of considering *Christ's* mediation must lead those educated amongst us who seek her mediation to give it the evil form and not the good. A Christ who shields us from the God that sitteth in the Heavens, who protects us from His fury—is not this the Christ that is very often presented to our imagination, I dare not say to our faith? Where that language is not used, as it sometimes is, formally and directly, is not there that vagueness, that theological indistinctness of which the Bishop complains, in our thoughts of Christ? Is He not partly conceived of as the Son in whom the world is reconciled to the Father, in whom men are at one with the Father; partly as One who saves us from the Father's wrath which, but for His interference to arrest it, would destroy us as it will destroy the world? Is not this to confound Christ with Antichrist, because we have first committed the other sin to which the Bishop says we are liable, of confounding God with the Evil Spirit?

Yes! it seems to me that if Christ is thus needful to keep us from God, instead of bringing us nigh to God, any number of mediators, descend-

ing to the lowest upon earth, may be needful to keep us from Him, to avert *His* wrath and vengeance. That is the Popery developing itself out of the very heart of Protestantism—defending itself by the current phrases of Protestantism—which we have a right to dread. Certainly no repetition of these Protestant phrases, no access of Protestant fury, will deliver us from it. The Bishop's remedy—a solemn examination of ourselves whether we are in very deed confessing Jesus to be the Christ—must be far more effectual.

When I speak of our dreading Christ, and asking a protection from him, I am using what may sound very fearful language; but a moment's reflection will convince you that I have a right to use it. We speak of Saul as owning a Christ who was to come, when he should have acknowledged a Christ who had come; but *we* cannot rest in the thought of a Christ that has come more than he could. We are living in an actual world, full of beauty, full of misery: what is to become of the world, must be a question with us which no conviction of any good or evil that has befallen it can set aside. Is Christ to destroy the world, or to save it? We may repeat a thousand times, "He has died to save the world;" but if when we say, "He is coming to judge the

quick and the dead," we mean by these words, "He is coming to condemn the greater part of the quick and the dead to utter hopeless ruin," we shall have an infinite dread of Christ, we shall inspire others with an infinite dread of Him, let our thoughts of the salvation which He once wrought out be what they may. The fear and horror of His appearance in glory will be the greater for the significance which we attach to the events of His appearance in great humility. We shall think, "All has been done for our race that could be done, and all has been done in vain. Christ was once a Saviour, so far as He could be; now His mind and purpose have changed. He will be manifested to take vengeance on those who have not accepted the offer which He has made them." I need not tell you that such is the language of our pulpits, of those in which no extravagant doctrine is preached, which best represent the ordinary religious opinions of the day. And the preachers in the pulpits actually suppose they are entering into the spirit of that Apostle who longed for the appearing of Christ in glory as that which was to accomplish the purpose of His death—which was to deliver, not only the sons of God, but the whole travailing creation. Surely, surely, if we believe Jesus to be

the Christ, we must believe Him to be the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. If we believe that he has redeemed men by His blood, we must bid them look for the day of His manifestation as the day of their redemption. We must tell them that the tyrants of the earth are to fall before its Deliverer. We are to speak of a wrath, a terrible wrath, which will come upon the earth to purge it of its crimes and oppressions : of a wrath which must especially make *us* tremble, since we like the Jews have been entrusted with a message of salvation to the world, and we like them have pretended that it was meant for us, and that damnation is for the world. If we do not think of these things, if we do not ask ourselves what we have to hope, and what we have to fear, if we do not long for the judgment which shall bring all things to light, we may find that we, like the Jewish priests, have no king but Cæsar, that our Christ is the most fearful tyrant which the world has ever seen. And then when Jesus is revealed, as he was when Jerusalem fell, to show who is King of kings and Lord of lords—we, who have sat at His feast, and taught in His streets, may be fighting on the side of His adversary.

Oh, my friend ! help in God's strength to keep this dire calamity from us ! You are sent out

to preach Christ to heathens and Mahometans : therefore you are not sent out to proselytize them to any opinion of ours. You are to proclaim Him as the Son of God, as the Head and Friend of every nation and every man ; therefore you are not to leave an impression upon the minds of any that He is our King and Deliverer more than He is theirs. You are to tell them that He is in you, testifying against your evils, encouraging you to trust in His righteousness ; therefore that He is in them, testifying against their evils, leading them to trust in His righteousness. They have many Christs : whatever person they reverence most, in the visible or invisible world, is their Christ. You will say to them, Jesus who has borne the nature of every man, who has died the death of every man, is *the* Christ : so whatever has been good in their old faith will be sanctified and adopted into the new ; whatever is foul and dark will be renounced. You will speak of a Father who loved the world, and sent the Son, His express image, by whom He had formed it, to redeem it from its enemies. You will say that through this Son there is a way open for them to the Father in Heaven ; that they may seek Him, because He is seeking them. You will not distract their minds with thoughts of

two Christs, one that has come to save, another that will come with quite another mind to judge. You will represent the judgment as the completion of the divine work of salvation. You will teach them what are the enemies from whom He came to save them, what are the enemies between whom and them He is judging now and will judge hereafter. Thus you may hope that God by your means will convert them from the Devil's Messiah to His Messiah, from him who will come in all deceitfulness and wickedness, to the Word whose purpose is to set righteousness and truth on the earth. Your battle will be with false Christs, or partly false Christs; less directly than ours with the Antichrist. But if you fight your battle bravely, you may make us understand much more clearly and fully what ours is. You may show us how our tolerance of the confusion between Christ and Antichrist is confusing your work whilst it is hastening our ruin. You may stir us up to pray, and may join with us in the prayer, that God will separate for ever between the Enemy that scatters, and Him in whom all are to be gathered in one.—Ever yours, &c.

LETTER IX.

HERESIES AND PERSECUTIONS.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Of all the words which fell from the Bishop of Oxford in the speech which has suggested these letters, none seemed to me more pregnant and profound than those which referred to persecution. We were in danger of worshipping the Devil instead of God, of putting Christ for Antichrist; when that frightful worship was established, when the Antichrist was confessed as the ruling power in the world, that would be the time of a sweeping persecution. For the spirit of infidelity, according to the Bishop, is the spirit of intolerance, if we become infidel the toleration which we have vaunted will disappear.

I accept this statement in all its particulars. I do look upon any blessings of toleration which we possess as the fruit of a conflict with Devil-worship, with the spirit of Antichrist. I believe

all the persecution that ever has been in the world, has been a homage to the Devil, a submission to the spirit of Antichrist. The prevalence of that homage, the triumph of that spirit, must therefore be the signal for a persecution, the removal of whatever has restrained persecution. The Bishop's doctrine must be true that infidelity is the root of intolerance. The connexion between this warning and those which preceded it, is therefore very close. Nothing may assist us better in applying them than the devout consideration of this.

How naturally it links itself with the history of Saul and his conversion, I need not remind you. The expression which he is fondest of when he is describing his state before the light shone upon his eyes and into his heart, is: "I was a persecutor and injurious." His acts were obviously those of a persecutor. It was in the midst of a scheme of persecution that he was struck down. It was his persecution which the voice of Jesus declared to be at war with Him. The acts, he assures us, expressed very accurately the intention of the actor. He had not entered upon them carelessly or thoughtlessly. His whole heart was in them. He was sure they were acts of service to God: acts that were

likely to recommend him to God, and to procure him the peace which he had not. And these considerations might have led us or any outside observer to choose any other name for him than that of infidel. He fully justifies the Bishop's explanation : he tells us, as I remarked before, that unbelief, a radical unbelief, was possessing him when he thought he was contending most earnestly for the traditions, the Scriptures, of the chosen race. If it was possible for the Evil Spirit so thoroughly to assume the form of an angel of light in his case—if infidelity could hide itself in him under the greatest confidence and security of belief—which of us can say that the Bishop's admonitions are not needful for him, that the test of the infidel spirit which he gives may not be the true one now as in the latter days of Jerusalem ?

Think of those latter days in relation to the history of Saul. He was persecuting to the death the sect or heresy of the Nazarenes. He himself belonged to the sect or heresy of the Pharisees. To some sect or heresy every Jew was supposed to be attached. He might be a Sadducee, comparatively indifferent to forms and traditions ; he might be a Pharisee, intensely zealous for them ; he might be an Alexandrian ; he might be an

ENSONO ; he might be an Herodian. But by some name he must be described. To be simply a Jew, simply a child of Abraham, was nothing : a publican might be that, a harlot might be that. A man must have some scheme of doctrine, some rules of practice. What were they ? What did he call himself ? Whence did he come ?

It was the leading offence of the disciple of Jesus that he did not own himself one of these sects. His Master, he said, had spoken to publicans and harlots, had treated them as children of Abraham, had said that He came as the common Shepherd of all. He had passed much of His time in Galilee ; he had mixed with Samaritans. Those who called themselves His church in Jerusalem, interpreted His words and His acts as the words and acts of One who had demanded the allegiance of all as subjects of His kingdom, had put down the Spirits to whom they had surrendered their bodies and spirits. In that character the people had revered him : in that character the priests had accused Him of sedition before the Romans. If He was not a King, the church had no message : if He was a King, it could not be a sect, it must be a witness of Him to the whole world.

The sign is that which is not of this world.

sects as such : not with the Pharisee more than the Sadducee : with both equally so far they divided the nation which Jesus came to unite. But Pharisees and Sadducees both must treat them as a sect. Their ridiculous pretension was an offence on different grounds to each : to the Pharisee because it assailed his influence over the people, to the Sadducee because he scorned the people. These sects had felt that they had a common interest against Jesus. Those who affirmed that He was alive, and a King, must be described as Nazarenes, as men who had tried to set up a Galilean pretender on the throne of David, and who, having failed in that object, were instituting a new kind of doctrine in his name.

Contemplated as a doctrine, it was more disagreeable to the Sadducees than to the Pharisees. The disciples of Jesus spoke to a spirit in man, they spoke of a baptism by a Divine Spirit ; the resurrection of Jesus was the sign that He was the Christ. The Sadducees had differed from the Pharisees in denying all communication with the unseen world, all idea of a life after the breath had left the body. The Nazarenes, it seemed to them, were reviving these tenets in a more outrageous, and yet a more alarming form, because one appealing to the sympathies of the

multitude. What, as the opinions of a school, were only follies, might, they thought, when thus embodied, be dangerous to the peace of society. They were in the ascendant : the High Priest was of their sect : it was needful to crush men whom they despised, when they had such an instrument for influencing the heart of an already disaffected nation.

From their more violent plans of persecution, we are told that the leader of the Pharisees in the Sanhedrim dissented. Gamaliel's party was down. He had much experience ; he had seen too many pretenders to have much dread of any new one ; he thought the new sect would fall to pieces of itself ; if it did not, it must have some divine element in it. Perhaps it might serve to keep alive some parts of the Pharisaic doctrine in the minds of the multitude ; at all events, the extinction of it would be a triumph to those who denied Angel and Spirit and the future state of rewards and punishments.

But what resemblance was there between the Pharisaical doctrine of a possible descent of an Angel or Spirit from some distant Heaven, and the Christian proclamation of a Holy Spirit actually coming from the Father of Spirits to claim outcasts as His children ? What was the resem-

blance between the Pharisaical doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments, and the proclamation that One who was the Head and King of the whole nation had risen from the dead because He was mightier than Death? When Jesus was walking on earth, He denounced the Pharisees *especially* as the foes of what was inward and spiritual. They made clean the outside of the cup and the platter, within was extortion and excess. Unless the righteousness of His disciples exceeded their righteousness, they could not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. The whole teaching of the Apostles intimated that Christ had come to make the tree good, that the fruit might be good; to establish them on a new root, to give them a new life. They could not separate the Resurrection from this new life: Christ had risen from the dead, that He might bestow it upon those who confessed themselves to be dead in trespasses and sins. The Resurrection did not refer to the future more than to the present: it did not concern those that were well, but those that were sick. To the man who was hugging himself with the thought of the good deeds that were to be paid for hereafter, it brought no comfort at all. However moderate, therefore, might be the temper of

some of the Pharisees towards the sect which the Sadducees wished to put down, it was clear that such a temper could not last very long. The Church of Jerusalem told the Jews that Jesus was *their* King. What if they should take that next step which was obviously involved in the first? What if they should say He was the King of *men*? What if they should say that the chosen nation had existed to tell all nations that their Desire, their Deliverer, had come? Then the Pharisee would feel that his strongest opinion was assailed—that his sect, far more than that of his rival, was defied. Then the zeal which was more characteristic of him than of the Sadducee—which was only composed in the last of fear and contempt mingled in various proportions—would be stirred to its depths. Even before the Rubicon was passed by Peter's going among the uncircumcised, the clear language of Stephen could leave no doubt whither that which called itself the Church was tending. It could not stop short of the proclamation that He whom it announced as the Son of God was the Head of every man; and that there was in man, in human beings, a spirit which His Spirit had come to bring out of its prison-house, to claim as the child of God, the inheritor of a Divine life.

The pupil of Gamaliel was not misled by any seeming likeness between the message of the Church and the notions about spirits or a Resurrection which were entertained by the Pharisees. He felt that it was a deadly war, that it behoved his school above all others to engage in the war. The High Priest, when Saul was in the fervour of his passion, was a Sadducee. It might be a humiliation in one sense to ask his help, but it was a triumph in another: it was turning the services of an enemy to account. To win such co-operation even very zealous men will stoop to mean concessions. He had no occasion for any. The Sadducee had shown himself eager enough to persecute. He might be very glad to find in the opposing ranks a man ready to undertake a commission for which few in his own would have had sufficient energy. It must have been a satisfaction that a promising disciple of the man who had rebuked his party for their violence should suggest measures so much more sweeping and exterminating than any which they had dreamed of.

Thus these two rival sects, existing in the heart of the Jewish nation, illustrated a truth which all later history was to establish—that it is the Sect temper, the Sect spirit, which, just

so far as it prevails, is, and must be, persecuting, let the notions which the sect professes be what they may. And they illustrate—for us at least who receive the narrative, and acknowledge the pretensions of the Apostles to be a church—that the Spirit which has formed the Church, the Spirit of holiness, must be always at war with the Sect spirit, the Spirit of persecution. Saul, once converted, never scrupled to say, “The persecuting spirit which had dominion over me was the Evil Spirit. I was driven on by that. The Evil Spirit whom I mistook for God made me a hater of mankind. The Spirit of the Father and the Son inspires me with a love for mankind, lays on me the obligation to tell men that this love is in God Himself, and how it has been manifested.”

But in every church of Jews and Gentiles which his Gospel called forth, the Sect spirit, which had once ruled him, appeared to rend and torment it. An eminent Statesman of our days once amused the House of Commons by saying that his opponents having established a Coalition Ministry seemed also to dream of a Coalition Church. Now it was just over such a church as this—the one which struck this politician as so ridiculous and incredible—that the

Apostles—St. Paul especially—had to watch. It was formed from a coalition of the most unsociable elements that ever were, or could be, combined. The man who had grown up in a continual protest against idolatry, who had cursed it from his infancy, was brought into coalition with the man who had grown up in the worship of idols, who had never separated his thoughts of anything divine from these, who regarded every one who tried to separate them as an atheist. And this statement represents most feebly the difficulties of this union. Every Jew brought with him not only the conviction, "The Lord our God is one God," but the habits and lessons of the opposing sects which had accepted that announcement as divine. Every Greek brought not only with him an idolatry, but a specific local idolatry which might be unlike that of his neighbour. He brought with him, besides his idolatry, the delight in opinions, the habit of clinging to some sophist or professor who taught opinions opposed to those of other candidates for popular admiration or for the favour of the enlightened few. The Greek had given proof throughout all history of his sectarian tendencies, of their connexion with the liveliness of his feelings and his intellect. No circumstances were so sure to develop

them as those in which he found himself in the Church.

We commonly attach great significance to what we call the peculiar gifts of the Apostles: we suppose they were specially effectual for the establishment of the church. St. Paul certainly did not dream that there was any power in these gifts to avert sectarian conflicts. All his Epistles say plainly that they were *not* averted. The Epistles not only refer to them, but are suggested by them. It is not the prudence of the Apostle, not his forbearance merely, which is called forth in his treatment of the sects and heresies in the different communities that arose at the sound of his Gospel. All his profoundest divinity, all in his teaching that has most moulded the mind of Christendom, is developed while he is pointing out the causes which threatened the unity of those bodies, in what the unity consisted, how it might be preserved. The Jewish claim to superiority over the Gentile on the ground of his Divine law, leads him to explain the use and blessing of the law as the discoverer to each man's conscience of his sin, leads him to proclaim the grand principle that Abraham and his children, as much as any Gentile, must believe in a God who justifies the ungodly. The grandeur of the covenant and the

law which proclaimed a righteous God, which announced Him as *the* God of the whole earth, is vindicated by the argument which overthrows the Jewish exclusiveness, which asserts the Gentile's right to believe. In this Epistle his own experience of the terror of the law, which he had condemned others for breaking and undervaluing, mingles obviously and directly with the general argument. It is not really less present to his mind when he is encountering the Corinthian disposition to make him and Apollos and Cephas the heads of different sects and parties. Does he for one moment assert the Pauline sect to be better than the Apollos or Cephas sect? If he did, he would be falling back into his old position as an heretical persecutor of heresy. That scheme of conduct which had once seemed to him pious and orthodox he had discovered to have its root in unbelief: the spirit which prompted it and him was the Devil's spirit. And now the reason stands out clearly before him. Men are not united in opinions; they are not bound together under sophists. Christ is the Head of a living body: all are members of Him—members therefore of each other. Each has its distinct function which no other can perform. Each is to feel with the other. All are baptized with a Spirit who enables

the members to perform their different functions, who inspires them with sympathy for each other. If there was no such baptism, no such Spirit, the coalition of parts in the body was simply impossible: they must burst asunder. If there was such a Spirit, if it was the Spirit of God, if He was stronger than the Devil, then though the struggle with the heretical schismatical section in each society, in each man, would always be tremendous, the good must prevail at last, the evil must be cast out. It was probably some of those calling themselves Paulites who endeavoured to set up the idea of a spiritual resurrection against a bodily resurrection. The treatment of the subject in the fifteenth chapter connects it throughout with that principle concerning the body and the members, which had been developed. If the Head had risen, then the members of the body must rise; if the Head had not risen, they could not rise. It was not a resurrection which any one could claim as his privilege. In Adam *all* died, in Christ *all* should be made alive: the Spirit who had quickened His body would quicken them. Flesh and blood could not inherit the Kingdom of God; but that which had been sown in corruption should be raised in incorruption; that which had been sown in weakness should be raised in power.

In every case the heresy is overthrown by the same method. Christ Himself, the crucified and risen Lord, is substituted for an opinion about Him, or His death, or His resurrection. The actual union of men in Him is substituted for any theory or dogma about the nature or mode of the union.

In Galatia the coalition of Jews and Gentiles was violently assaulted. For Jews who had acknowledged Jesus to be the Christ taught the Gentiles of this Church that if they would be saved they must come under the terms of their covenant. The whole Gospel was gone if this heresy prevailed. And evidently it was prevailing. It seemed to be sustained by the clearest testimonies of the Scriptures ; if the old covenant was divine, what could set it aside ? St. Paul turns upon his Jewish opponents, will have no compromise with them : life and death are in the issue. He cuts the ground from under their feet. He says that they are destroying their covenant : they are making God's free promise dependent upon a law which was given that men might be shown their transgressions, and might cleave to the Mediator in whom the promise was bestowed. These Judaizers pretending to confess Jesus as the Messiah, did not believe that He was the

Mediator in whom all God's promises were accomplished, who had fulfilled the law. But the Messiah was the Son of God who had been sent in the fulness of the time to redeem men into their true state of sons of God, to bestow on them His free Spirit, that they might walk in the spirit and not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. Those who destroyed the liberty with which Christ had made them free, were making obedience to the law impossible.

The heresy which tormented the Ephesians was not one which arose out of indifference to spiritual power, out of denial of communications with the Unseen. They were exposed to diviners who traded on the strong conviction that men had these powers and were capable of these communications. Hence they were led to despise ordinary relations and practical duties. While they were listening to such men they heard the message of the Apostle. They were told of a Divine Spirit with which they might be baptized, a Spirit who would guide them into all Truth. To turn from their curious arts, to burn their magical books, might be the first effect of belief in such tidings. But the tendency was there. It would soon mingle itself with the new doctrine. Was not this Spirit one which gave them insight into the past and the

future? Did it not open to them hidden mysteries? Did it not excuse them from mere rules and formalities? An Aristotelian, old or modern, would say, "This being the bias of the twig, bend it the other way. These men are possessed with thoughts of the Spirit. Give them the counteraction of the Letter." St. Paul had not learnt this wisdom. He speaks of the Spirit as unveiling in that age a secret which had been kept hidden from the foundation of the world. It was the secret that the two divisions of mankind, the Jews and the other nations, were one in Christ, and would be gathered up in Him. This being so, he asks for them the fullest illumination of the Spirit that they may apprehend this truth. He prays that He would make them know the height and depth and length and breadth of the love of God, which passed knowledge. On the ground of this prayer, he builds exhortations not to thief, not to lie, not to let corrupt conversation proceed out of their mouths. On the ground of it he builds lessons for the life of husbands and wives, fathers and children, masters and servants. For, as he says—here more emphatically than elsewhere—there is a perpetual battle between the Spirit of Holiness and Light, and the powers of darkness, of spiritual wickedness in high places, which were

ever seeking to drag them from their high estate into corruption and ruin.

The Colossian Church, like the Ephesian, were tempted to the opinions and practices which spring from the belief of possible communications with the unseen powers. What the Angels were, and what intercourse Angels had with men, they were curious to know. And that they might know they had various contrivances and rules for mortifying the flesh. Those who followed them carefully would be capable of rising to the heights of mystical contemplation. Here was a seed of separation and heresy that was sure to expand and multiply. The adepts would be severed from the noviciates, those who were admitted to the divine converse from those who were merely animal. The animal man would become very animal indeed; the man on the spiritual heights, who despised him and stood aloof from him, would often be surprised at the power of that which he had denounced as material, would succumb to it sometimes with secret hypocrisy, sometimes with mad delight. Would not a prudent man be careful to discountenance in such men all thoughts of a hidden Christ? Would he not lead them merely to the external history? It is to these very Colossians that he sets forth Christ

in them as the hope of glory. He strikes at the root of mystical self-exaltation by proclaiming Christ as the Head of every man. Contempt of the body, and will-worship, he denounces as hindering the very object at which they aim. If they seek the common Lord, Him who is at the right hand of God—if they set their affections on Him—that will mortify the corrupt affections, which ascetical devices often stimulate and vivify. And here again the plainest, vulgarest morality is shown to be the fruit and blessing of the Spirit's government.

The persecutions of their Jewish enemies, the thought of their leaders' imprisonment, had evidently produced much despondency in the Philippians. Such despondency may be as fatal to fellowship as self-confidence. It is strikingly characteristic of the Epistle to them that it continually turns them from self-contemplation to the common object, to Him who, being in the form of God, humbled Himself, and became of no reputation, and died the death of the Cross: to Him who is highly exalted, at whose name every knee is to bow—of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. All troubles, whether they befall the flock or its Shepherd, are goads to him and to them, forcing them to seek

that righteousness which is not their own ; which is of God ; which all alike may inherit by faith. Nowhere does this high theology more associate itself with the vexations and trials of existence, nowhere do we see more how it loses its virtue for each individual man, if it is not presented to a whole body, if any line is to be drawn between those who may and may not claim the blessing of it. Such distinctions are the destruction of a church, the cause of all heresies.

Look, again, at the Epistle to the Thessalonians. They have been tormented with thoughts of some great judgment which is to overtake the nations, but especially the chosen nation. They tremble as they anticipate this judgment, this end of the world. What use is there in doing any work if the event is so nigh ? why be at pains about anything ? So argue these well-disposed, kindly Macedonians, who have listened to the Apostle with great earnestness—who at his word have turned from idols to serve the living and true God—who think that he has given them warnings which they are obeying in the simplest way. And has he not given them these warnings ? Does he not expect this judgment ? Assuredly he does. He looks for a revelation of the Man of Sin

who is opposed to the true Christ. All this, he says, is nigh at hand. There will be a delay before it comes. He that lets will let till he be taken away. But the delay cannot be long. There will be flaming fire; there will be a sentence on those who will not have deliverance for themselves, and will keep others from it. The old world will pass away; the Son of Man will be revealed. These words I have partly considered already. A new light is thrown upon them when we recollect what St. Paul had discovered to be the curse of his nation, what he had discovered to be the curse of all nations and all churches. There was a time when he had longed earnestly for the overthrow of the Roman power, for the independence of Judæa. That was the time when he was wishing for a Christ who should be another Cæsar, who should merely exalt the Hebrew and depress the Latin. Now he perceives that the Roman power had been a divine let or hindrance to the full manifestation of the Antichristian Spirit. When that was no longer dominant in Jerusalem, the Sæct demon, kept in a certain check by his justice, would burst forth unrestrained; Pharisees and Sadducees would fly at each other's throats. The commonwealth, long rent by them, would be

dismembered utterly. The most tremendous sentence ever passed upon a nation would be executed by its own hand. The victory of Titus would be a witness of the divine mercy, in putting an end to the religious fury. But was this a reason for the Thessalonians to abstain from work? Was this passing away of an old age—this opening of the new age, something which should shake their constancy? Was it not a confirmation of all that they had believed? Was it not a proof that they had not followed a cunningly devised fable when they had confessed the Crucified Man to be the Lord of all. Away then with this cowardice! Let each mind his own business, and do his work quietly. If he will not work, neither let him eat.

Now supposing these Epistles were intended, —as we have all said that they were—to be guides to the Church in all the stages of its history, warnings of the perils to which it would be exposed at one time as much as another, divine illuminations as to the method of escaping those perils, and of maintaining its existence, we cannot doubt (1) that sects and heresies of the most opposite kinds would spring up in every part of it, would take their shape and colour from various local circumstances, would be always

seeking to sever one portion of it from the rest.

(2.) That to set up one of these heresies against the other, is the natural tendency of every man. (3.) That whoever indulges that natural

tendency assists the growth of heresy as such while he labours to confute a particular heresy.

(4.) That every Church which should attempt to suppress the positive opinion or conviction of any of its members, must favour the growth of heresy within it, and the establishment of heresy without it. (5.) That every Church which takes

this course is likely at last to fall into the radical heresy of denying that Christ is the Head of a living body in which His Spirit is seeking to cultivate the thought, belief, practical energy of each member of the body to the utmost, and to bring the thoughts, beliefs, practical energies of all the members into harmony.

(6.) That if this heresy is fully developed, the Church must fall into the same condition as the Jewish nation when it yielded itself utterly and absolutely to the spirit of division, and when it said anathema to the Spirit of Jesus.

If this be so, our fathers were not abetting heresy or establishing heresy when they protested against the claim of the Papacy to put down heresy, and to maintain the faith once delivered

to the saints. They were protesting against an heretical experiment, an experiment which had divided Christendom within itself, an experiment which had continually restrained the work of the Spirit in communities and in individuals, and which had issued in the denial of Christ as the actual and present Head of the Church and of mankind. Such a protest was a protest on behalf of a Catholic Church, a Church of Christ, a Church governed by a Holy Spirit. The protest was opposed by an appeal to numbers and to tradition, just as the testimony of the early Church was: it was resisted like that, by outward persecution. Whoever yields to this argument from numbers and tradition, ought to shun the acts of the early Church: whoever thinks that persecution for Christian orthodoxy is profitable, stands in the heat and reason alike *Sancti*'s persecutions in behalf of the Jewish orthodoxy. The *Pagan* traditions went back as far as the *medieval* traditions: the one were not more valuable and more true than the other. *Sancti* had the greater excuse from *Sancti* for standing in *Sancti* and *Sancti* for those who were likely to destroy the distinction between the *Sancti* and the *Sancti*, that the *Pagan* had the very name of the *Sancti* and

tortures which they sanctioned. I say *any one*. I would not insult the young Pharisee by comparing his worst acts with those of men who notoriously were plotting for their own aggrandisement, or that of nephews and sons, under the pretext of advancing the cause of the Church. I take the very best and most conscientious Christian persecutor whose name and acts have come down to us, and I mean that it will be hard to make out a defence for him which will not apply *à fortiori* to him who took the journey to Damascus.

But if I defend Protestants on this ground, I am bound to ask what better apology they have for any one of the persecutions by which they have endeavoured to extirpate the *belief* of Romanists, or of any sect among themselves? If they deny the right of Latins to establish a system which excludes Greeks or Protestants from the body of Christ, how dare *they* exclude Latins or Greeks, or any man of any profession whatever from His body? This surely is Protestant heresy; this is putting a Protestant opinion, a notion of ours, or a denial of other men's notions and opinions, in place of the Son of God. And such heresy has been punished, must be punished by the multiplication of

heresies. Protestants began with asserting men's right to believe, not implicitly, but directly, in Christ. Such a claim necessarily awakened a multitude of thoughts which had been asleep. As they started up, half-bewildered, out of the midst of dreams, they could but assume partial, often grotesque shapes. By doing justice to each of them, by recognizing each as an effort to grasp some part of the truth as it is in Jesus, by urging all to seek for that Spirit of love and power and a sound mind, who would bring crude thoughts to maturity, irregular and disjointed speculations into unity, these one-sided efforts of earnest minds might have been saved from passing into denials and contradictions of each other; the unity of the Church might have been saved. But Protestants darted savagely at the weak point—or what seemed to be the weak point—in the statements of any one who was strongly possessed by a belief. He was accused of rebelling against the God whom he knew that he wished to serve, of rejecting the Christ in whom he knew that he was trying to trust. The possible consequences of his opinion were accurately pointed out. Young men were warned to avoid him. Many of them being earnest, and not caring for the judgment of the public, were

attracted to him, for he had met some craving in their minds. A school gathered about him. It fulfilled some of the predictions which had been launched forth against its founder: for it began to dwell much on his denials, on that wherein he opposed other men's faith. It was kept alive, even kept in a condition of moderate health, though mixed with symptoms of disease, by persecution. When that ceased, it stood forth the respectable, recognized sect, full of worldly precautions for the protection of its own existence, of schemes for winning proselytes from other sects; tolerant while it was apathetic, fierce in any moment of renovated vigour.

This process has been going forward in Protestant lands ever since the Reformation; the principle which has been at work in it is active in England at the present day. We have all seen the operation of it against persons suspected of Romanism, Antinomianism, Unitarianism, Hegelism, Comteism. It has recruited the ranks of each one of the schools to which these names are attached. It has turned affection into suspicion, sympathies to antipathies, convictions to contradictions. Well may the Bishop of Oxford say that our toleration is a very weak plant; a single night blast may wither it. If we do not learn to

be intolerant of the Spirit of enmity and hatred who is seeking to possess us all: if we do not own that every act and thought of bitterness, by whomsoever perpetrated and entertained, is of his inspiration: if we do not own that every right thought and just work and good desire, in whomsoever it dwells, comes from the Holy Spirit: if we do not trace all tenderness and charity to Him, and remember that they are only kept alive in us or in any man by His presence: we may find ourselves, before we are aware, in the midst of that persecution which the Bishop has foretold, and alas! not in the character of the persecuted whom Jesus has blessed, but of the persecutors who are under His curse.

My friends, are not you worried and tormented when you hear us talking to each other at home of our "unhappy divisions?" Are not you inclined often to say, "Unhappy! what then, are they still, as the Jews said they were, to work together?" Are they divided in that which makes the Gospel appear as there is in the BIBLES among whom it is to be preached? Is God to be divided in His love?"

I wish you would study the above passages before you: if you do, you may perhaps experience as we, your holy and true as to be persecuted.

The fact is this. We have talked about the sins of churchmen as if they were venial sins; about the sins of men outside the church as if they were mortal sins. We have not frankly acknowledged that these heresies and divisions of ours are the root-sins of human society; those which are threatening its dissolution; those which are most directly at war with the Spirit of holiness. If the Sermon on the Mount is true, Christ did not come to put down murder, but the hatred which produces murder; not adultery, but the lusts which produce adultery. He came to regenerate the principle, not to improve the surface of human existence. If there is a church on earth, it is a witness of this truth; it is a witness for the renovation of the springs of human action. And the chosen witness exhibits the principle of hatred, of separation, in its most terrible forms.

This may be a confession which we are very slow to make, but God demands it of us; there can be no real extirpation of Devil-worship till we own where it begins, how it is sustained. It was not in the Roman power that the Apostles recognized the great foe to the Gospel; it was the Jewish sects, those which professed most orthodoxy, that resisted the message of a restoring Spirit. The sects wanted to be rid of the Romans,

and to have a power like theirs. The yoke was thrown off: then began the reign of anarchy and devilry. Is it not so now? The Church desires to contend with the world. How? By proclaiming a Divine Spirit capable of working out the inward change, which no outward machinery can effect? Not at all; but by obtaining an outward machinery, which shall be a rival to the machinery of States. Such a machinery may be called a church machinery, or what you please; it will be to all intents and purposes a sect machinery; it will be a machinery for punishing heresy and for spreading heresy; it will make the Church more and more into a mortal scheme for propagating opinions, less and less into a divine society for propagating a Gospel. In fact there will be no Gospel to mankind. The Church will simply bear this message to the universe: "We are saved, you are lost." And such a salvation will not mean a salvation from any of the evil habits of the world, from pride, malice, uncharitableness. It will mean an adoption into the chosen body of all the corruptions against which it is sent to protest.

But if, utterly discarding this dream of a church, you maintain your own position as one sent out from the Church in England to tes-

tify of the redemption of the world in Christ, for the power of His Spirit, what an example you may set us! You wish to be a Protestant; you will be so in the strictest sense of the word. You will protest, not in word but act, against all attempts to narrow the Church by setting up any head over it except Christ. In act, I say, "not in word," meaning that the resolution to do this will involve no attack, open or covert, upon Romanists—rather an intense desire to claim them as members of the same catholic fellowship with yourself. *In word*, however, emphatically in this sense: that all your words to your heathen brethren will be an announcement that there is such a church, such a family, united in the great Elder Brother, admitting men of all races and of all notions, if they do not make their races or their notions an excuse for separation from each other. You wish to be an English priest: and you will be so. You will maintain the best habits and traditions of your country, which have neither been Romish nor anti-Romish—which have been practical, not dogmatic—which have recognized the State minister as having a different function from the ecclesiastical minister, but as not less a servant of God. You will only throw off the narrow, negative English tradition which interferes with

the full recognition of men as men, with the acknowledgment of their particular modes and habits as not less suitable to them than ours are to us, as being under the cultivation of the same Divine Spirit. So you will in your work illustrate the true toleration and the true intolerance—the toleration of that Apostle who became all things to all men that he might gain some; the intolerance of that heretical and persecuting temper which is the greatest sign of unbelief in God, the most acceptable of all sacrifices to the Devil.—Yours, &c.

LETTER X.

SACRIFICES TO GOD AND TO THE EVIL SPIRIT.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—You will not, I hope, suspect me of using the phrase with which I concluded my last letter in any loose rhetorical sense. When I spoke of sacrifices to the Devil, I meant Sacrifices to the Devil. I do believe that we are in danger of presenting such sacrifices, of making ourselves the sacrifices.

The expression will at once recall words which are attributed in our translation to St. Paul. *“What say I then? That the idol is anything, or that what is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything? But I say that those things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to Devils and not to God. And I would not that you should have fellowship with Devils.”* I need not tell you that this version is inaccurate, mischievously inaccurate. St. Paul says nothing about the Gentiles which they would not have admitted, nothing in the least vitupera-

tive. The demons or secondary powers presiding over different parts of Nature, over different cities, over favoured men, were notoriously, confessedly, the chief objects of their worship ; to them chiefly the sacrifices were presented. There was a supreme God above or beneath all these demons. He might sometimes be contemplated as Zeus, especially when there were dreams of an earlier, happier world which some elder, more paternal deity ruled ; especially when some name must be found for one who quelled the brute ambition of the Titans or who crushed the benevolent purposes of Prometheus towards man. But Zeus was himself full of earthly passions, which affected his justice and determined the exercises of his power. His could not be the all-prevailing will. He must have had an origin. There must be something behind him. Was it destiny ? Was it love ? Should it be recognized as the Unknown God to whom an altar might be raised in some great calamity, after the gods to whom names had been given were exhausted ?

Most exactly then, in conformity with evident facts, did the Apostle speak when he said that the sacrifices were not offered to *the* God, the righteous God whom he revered as the Creator of heaven and earth, of all things visible and

invisible; but to demons which had a limited dominion in earth, or sea, and air, to whom their worshippers imputed a mixture of qualities like their own, not wholly evil, not wholly good, just such as a creature in whom a spirit was lusting against a flesh and a flesh against a spirit, would naturally create for himself. He came to withdraw the Corinthians and idolaters from such demons. He did not count the idol itself, the wood and stone which was worshipped, anything evil; he did not recognize any evil in the animal which was offered to the idol. But there was a mixed deity, made in the likeness of men, to which the worshipper did homage through the wood and stone, with which his spirit held fellowship in the act of sacrifice. Such reverence, such fellowship, were not elevating, but depraving, to creatures made in the likeness of the Eternal God. The Apostle who asserted for them the right to call themselves sons of God in Christ, would lead them from the reverence of that which, at its very best, was imperfect, which might be unclean, to the reverence of the Perfect, of the absolutely Holy; from fellowship with images of their own characters, to fellowship with Him who had shown forth His true image in His incarnate Son.

The error which identifies those demons with

powers essentially and altogether evil has not been an innocent one. It has been the parent of a multitude of misconceptions concerning the Greek as well as the Hindu mythology which have perplexed classical and oriental interpreters, and have produced a violent revulsion in them against the preaching of the Gospel. They have said boldly and honestly, "Apollo, Pallas, Artemis, Brahma, Vishnu, were not Devils, as you report them to have been. There is in them an acknowledgment of light, wisdom, purity, which cannot be devilish." Still more has this language confused the practice of Christian men. It was clear that the evils which were found in Heathendom all existed in Christendom. The names might be gone; the powers remained. Why should not any part of nature be in possession of some evil spirit? Why should not any man be able to cast an evil eye on his fellow-creatures and to blast his fortunes or his character? Mr. Leckey has not exaggerated the number or the frightfulness of the crimes which thoughts and feelings of this kind have generated in Christendom. They are some of the more startling and tremendous phenomena in the world's history. He has done well to fix our attention upon them, whether he has

shown us the way of deliverance from them or not.

But there is in this very mistake a singular instinct of the truth. St. Paul did unquestionably feel that his warfare was against Evil—Evil in its most radical and concentrated form. The demons whom the Gentiles worshipped were not Devils. This notion that any part of creation could be evil, was precisely the one against which he protests in the passage which I have quoted. Yet men had an inclination to worship evil: it was an inclination which was waxing stronger and stronger in that time: all the abominations of the empire were nourishing it; all the scepticism and despair about any good which could overcome those abominations nourished it. The powers of nature were assuming in men's eyes a more and more malignant aspect: the sense of any divine Kings who might appear to help patriots in their battles for freedom was waxing feebler and feebler. It was not in heathen lands, however, as we have seen already, that St. Paul discovered the centre of the conflict with spiritual wickedness. That, he perceived with awe, was in his own land; in the Temple wherein the sons of Levi still offered the morning and evening sacrifice, incense was ascending in very deed to the Devil, and not to God.

If he believed Jesus to be the Son of God must he not have thought this? Were not the priests, the sons of Aaron, the very men who had cried out, and invited the people to cry out, "*Let Him be crucified!*" Had not they refused to enter the judgment hall, lest they should be polluted when they ate the passover? Had not they come from the Temple and the feast to wag their heads and say, "*He saved others; Himself He cannot save!*" These men represented the hierarchy, which we all admit could claim a divine appointment, could allege a clear succession. When had Pilate, the Roman Governor—when had any heathen priest—exhibited an abhorrence of the Divine Image which could compare with this? "*They have said and do not believe it,"* was the language of Jesus Himself.

Do I seek examples before our eyes which of us can regard upon any identity of position or feeling with their own eyes and which these persons will not be so much as those who have the same position and the same feelings may be subject to the same and will manifest it in the same manner? There is no wonder that in the midst of the same world and the history of Christ is a wonder that is so possible in

such an inversion of all worship, not in some other day, but in our own ?

When I use this language I accept what I presume would be the teaching of the Bishop about the Presbyter of the new economy ; I depart from the teaching of many whose intentions I respect and honour. I think that we, as much as any Aaronic priest, are conversant with sacrifice ; that our functions and his *can* be compared. Instead of fearing to associate prayer and worship with sacrifice, I feel more and more how much my mind has suffered from the habit of separating them ; how necessary it is to remember that every man—Jew, Turk, Christian, Infidel—must offer a sacrifice to some God ; no less a sacrifice than himself. How grand the privilege is of being taught to *what* God we have a right to offer ourselves as sacrifices ! If I did not hold that a Presbyter of the Christian Church might offer his congregation and himself as acceptable offerings to the true God, I should consider that the fewer litanies he repeated the better ; that he ought never to take part in the Holy Communion.

In our Communion Service we speak of a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, which has been made for the sins of

the whole world. In our Communion Service we speak of offering our bodies and souls to God. Are these real or unreal words? What do they mean? Where can we learn what this full and perfect sacrifice is, to whom it has been offered, why we should give thanks for it, why our communion is grounded upon it, what it has to do with our sacrifices? Where can we learn in what relation this sacrifice and our sacrifice stand to those which have been presented at the door of the tabernacle by the priests of the house of Levi? We want information upon these subjects. All Christendom wants it. We cannot get it from the traditions of Romanists or of Protestants; it is required especially that we may understand those traditions, that we may not be the victims of them. Most persons who adhere to the maxims of the Reformation would say that we must turn to the New Testament for this help; few will dispute that if it is to be found anywhere, it will be found in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Among the Epistles of St. Paul, to which I referred in my last letter, I did not include that which so many in former days, and a majority of critics in our own day, have denied to be his. Their arguments may not seem to me conclusive:

the facts on which the arguments are grounded I should insist on as much as they can. I may not feel sure that the Apostle, whose characteristic it was that he became all things to all men, must have adopted the same forms of thought and modes of expression in writing to his own countrymen, which were most suitable in addressing the inhabitants of Gentile cities. I may not see anything very puzzling in the fact that the subject of Sacrifice, which is only handled incidentally elsewhere, should have been reserved for special and elaborate treatment, when he was appealing to the conscience of men who prized sacrifices which he and they acknowledged to be of divine appointment. That the Epistle is not essentially, vehemently, Pauline in *this* sense, that it is occupied throughout with a protest against a relapse into the conditions of the old covenant—no commentator, however learned, can persuade me. But we owe the deepest thanks to those who have forced us to notice the peculiar structure of this book, who have not allowed us to confound it with others which have a quite distinct character and purpose. Such observations are real helps to the right understanding of the Epistle; and that is what we require. I hold this Letter to be the one which most discovers to us our dangers at

this time, and may most clearly point the way out of them. The dispute about authorship may entertain those who have leisure for it; the meaning of the Epistle is a question of business for us and for our children.

I will draw your attention to some of its most obvious features. You will of course compare the words with the text, to see whether I have perverted it.

He affirms—I. That God is speaking to men through a Son who is the express image of His Person, by whom He made the worlds. II. That such a Son is spoken of by the Psalmists and Prophets of the Old Testament; that they recognize Him as above all Angels, as one with the - Eternal God, as the Brother of suffering creatures on earth. III. That because those of whom He was the Brother were partakers of flesh and blood, He also took part of the same; that He was made lower than the Angels for the suffering of death; that He had tasted death for every man; that He had been crowned with glory and honour; that so were fulfilled the words of the Psalmist, which declared that all creatures, according to God's original law, were subject to man. IV. That this suffering and exalted Son is the High Priest, the perfect Mediator between God and

man, not in virtue of an arbitrary decree, but of an eternal constitution. V. That priests on earth—being appointed by a mere decree however divine a decree—could not fulfil the meaning of the priesthood, which implied the perfect union between the worshipper and the object of worship. VI. That the sacrifices of the Jewish law being animal—being sacrifices of something belonging to the person, not of the person himself—could never satisfy the demands of the conscience for reconciliation with God. VII. That the outpouring of the blood of animals, which was appointed by the Jewish law, could never purify the conscience from its defilements. VIII. That the sacrifice of Jesus, because it was grounded on a perfect union of the *will* of God and the *will* of the Man, did satisfy the demand of the conscience for reconciliation. IX. That the pouring out of *His* life-blood did take away the conscience of sins. X. That on this perfect mediation, this perfect sacrifice, rested a new covenant which had superseded the old, this being the tenour of that covenant: “*I will write my laws in their hearts, and in their mind will I write them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*” XI. That the blessedness of this mediation and sacrifice was that men

could draw nigh to God with pure hearts and clear consciences, entering, not into His figurative, but His actual presence, in Him who had withdrawn the veil from the Divine countenance, in whom men might know that they were reconciled to their heavenly Father. XII. That the Church of Palestine and the Hebrew Christians, generally, through trust in sacrifices which could not take away sins, in carnal ordinances which were soon to be swept away, were sinking into practical unbelief. XIII. That an earthquake was at hand which would shake, not earth only, but also heaven ; and that if they were trusting in any outward economy, not in Him who had established it, and of whose divine purposes it bore witness, they would be found apostates. XIV. That this same crisis would reveal the God who had been the object of faith to all past generations. The men whose names they revered most had subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, turned to flight the armies of the aliens because they believed in a God who was a living Deliverer, and who would reveal Himself more perfectly to their descendants than to them. XV. These witnesses were about them now ; if they entered into their faith, if they believed in Him who had fulfilled the expectation of their fathers,

they would have fellowship with an innumerable company, with the Church of the First-born, with God the Judge of all, with the Mediator of the New Covenant, with that blood which spoke of reconciliation between brothers as the blood of Abel spoke of their separation. XVI. Remembering this reconciliation, they could keep alive brotherly kindness, hospitality to strangers, the purity of the marriage bed, compassion to the afflicted. These were acceptable sacrifices, which those could offer who did not stand in the outer tabernacle, but who might approach the highest altar. If they claimed that privilege, they might be content to bear reproaches. Christ had borne all reproaches : He had suffered without the camp before He went into the Holiest of the Holies.

These lessons, by whomsoever they were first written down, interpret the very existence of Christendom, the meaning of that Eucharist which was regarded as the highest act of worship, as the celebration of the highest sacrifice, as the participation in it, as the witness to all men of Christ's death till He should come, as the offering of men's bodies, souls, and spirits to the Eternal God that He might work in them to will and to do of His good pleasure. In this sense the Eucharist subverted the sacrifice to demons ; in

this sense it asserted the privilege of men, through their union in the Son of Man, to rise above the service of Angels, and claim fellowship with the Father of all.

The Reformers in the sixteenth century discovered how little the sacrifice which was celebrated daily in the cities of Christendom bore this witness, how much it bore an opposite witness. It spoke of a redemption and atonement, not accomplished once for all by the High Priest, but to be accomplished by priests on earth; not of a communion with Him who was within the Veil, but of a figurative heaven brought down to earth. It delivered men from no demon-worship. It threw them upon demon-worship. The highest heaven was still behind the Veil. God had descended into the elements. Yet even in that form, only the priests might approach Him: the people must seek intermediate intercessors. Saints, some derived from the past, some dwelling in local spots and commanding local blessings—all imperfect, preferred for their imperfection, adapting themselves to individual tempers and diseases, must defend them from the Judge of all. Dead relics were to hold those bound, who professed to believe in a risen Christ.

Here was a ground for noble protests. The

words "finished salvation" became the watch-words of the Reformation. Cries against the Mass as a denial of the Mediator and of His atonement, resounded from the pulpits of Protestant divines, often led to outrages against the existing form of worship in countries where Protestantism had obtained ascendancy, and where, through its rulers or its mobs, it could return some of the persecutions which it had undergone.

But it was to give its opponents *their* revenge. The common Mass was exchanged for prayers or sermons, or a mixture of the two, in Protestant churches; but where was the pledge of a finished salvation? Where were the signs to the world that any communion had been established between men and God, because He who was the perfect image of God had taken the nature of man, and had died the death of man? Where was the thanksgiving for such a reconciliation? Where was the assurance of all those blessings which the Epistle to the Hebrews declares that the Son of God had claimed for the race, and the forgetfulness of which, in those to whom he wrote, he counted a token of coming apostasy? The Communion offers a badge to each of the sects into which Christendom is divided. But since the idea of sacrifice can never

be banished from any society of men, since the name Atonement is felt to express the characteristic of a Christian community, it must be explained *why* an atonement has been necessary, *why* it should be connected with sacrifice. The explanation is just that which a heathen would offer:—Men have sinned against the highest God; He must have recompence or satisfaction for their sin. If He pardons any, some adequate price must be found for His pardon. Christ has offered this adequate price. God may now forgive the offences of His creatures—of those at least who understand and accept this scheme of salvation.

God forbid that I should say this was the *faith* of our nation, or of any nation. Where there is anything like a Lord's Supper, however it may have been changed into a symbol of party and division—where the Epistle to the Hebrews is read and accepted as a divine document—where such a conscience has been awakened in men as a Gospel recognized, however imperfectly, for one thousand years must awaken—wherever a faint echo of the voice that shook Christendom out of its slumbers in the sixteenth century still lingers among us,—there it is impossible that a scheme of salvation should ever entirely displace an actual salvation; that the High Priest and Mediator who unites

men to God, should be exchanged for a Mediator who interposes to shield men from God. But the most opposing influences are leading us to this result. The Unitarians as a sect have declared that the ideas of propitiation, atonement, sacrifice, belong to a barbarous theology; that the simple worship of a Father in Heaven excludes them; that prayers may be constructed without the least reference to them. Numbers who have no special sympathy with the Unitarian sect, yet observing the effect of notions about sacrifice upon both the heathen and the Christian world, have eagerly joined in this protest, affirming that it was good for the interest of civilization, let its divinity be worth little or much. On the other hand, men who have felt the demand for sacrifice and atonement in their inmost hearts, who have been certain that the rites practised by all kindreds of the earth inarticulately express this demand, have resolved that they would not purchase the reputation of being civilized, or of having an amiable, reasonable theology, at the price of being dishonest to their own convictions or of separating themselves from their fellow-creatures. Such men, when pressed by arguments which they cannot answer, naturally turn to the explanations of sacrifice which apologists

and divines supply; persuade themselves that these are the necessary protections against the Unitarian denials; and so endorse, for the sake of controversy and confutation, a theory which in hours of bodily anguish and spiritual conflict proves incapable of sustaining their hope for others or themselves.

Meantime the more learned Unitarians, convinced that the ideas of sacrifice and atonement which they had wished to eliminate from the New Testament occupy a very prominent place in it, have learnt to treat its different books in the spirit of modern criticism, attributing them to Alexandrian mystics or schoolmen who were bent upon constructing a theological or theosophical theory. It is very important for this purpose that they should insist upon the ordinary popular representation of these books as the only true one. They therefore fraternise eagerly with the orthodox critics, if in nothing else, yet in their expressions of scorn for those who complain of their interpretations. "Of course," they say, "the only natural sense of the doctrine is the common one. Those who think otherwise, are trying to reconcile the notions they have learnt from later times with a superstitious reverence for the book. Either from self-interest or from the

impulse of an irregular and insane fancy, they wish to make both the fishermen and the doctors speak the dialect of the nineteenth century." Such censures are caught up triumphantly by their opponents. "We need not argue," they say, "with those who pretend that our notions of sacrifice are not the notions of the Apostles. The Unitarians and Rationalists decide that question in our favour."

Such a consensus of opinions is of course very formidable. And there is a more formidable consensus still. Protestants and Romanists, even while they denounce and excommunicate each other, yet appear to recognize the fact of depravity, of Evil, as the fundamental fact of divinity. The fall of Adam—not the union of the Father and the Son, not the creation of the world in Christ—is set before men in both divisions of Christendom as practically the ground of their creed. The teachings of the Divine Word—whose delights were with the sons of men, who was the Light of the world—if they are recognized at all, are only spoken of as disturbances of an all but unbroken devilry: the incarnation itself, the death of Jesus, the resurrection of Jesus, are but events which in some small degree, for some portion of the world, diminish the victory of the Destroyer: for men in

general they make that victory more appalling and more secure. The general Mass, therefore, of the Romanist nations, the public worship of the Protestant nations, can but present themselves to the body of the citizens in both as needful though very feeble protections against a Power which is threatening them with ruin, and which may possibly be soothed and caressed into pity. Is not this to make our sacrifices Devil-sacrifices? Is the warning of the Bishop needless, that we should one and all see whither our theological indistinctness is leading us—in what a worship it may at last issue?

And yet I believe a reformation more complete by far than that of the sixteenth century may be awaiting us, through the mercy of Him whom we have reviled. I do not expect it to come merely through the study of the Epistle to the Hebrews, or of any portion of Scripture. In Luther's day the Bible did not come first. Bitter anguish came first: the Bible spoke to that. I do not expect it to come from creeds or sacraments: they correspond like the Scripture to human necessities. When we are not awakened to a sense of these, creeds and sacraments may be to us—what they are now. But if there should go forth a message even from the feeblest lips, "God is

verily the Atoner, the Reconciler of human beings. He has made them one in Christ. He has made peace with them in Christ. The Divider has proved weaker than the Uniter. The Son who could give up Himself to do His Father's will has prevailed over the Spirit of self-will, to which we have all yielded"—then we may leave the Unitarian critics to do their worst against the book which testifies of this Atoner, of this offering. They may prove their critical point to their own entire satisfaction—who will care? If the book speaks to that which I and they have need of—it may have been picked out of a ditch, it may have been composed in any century—the heart in them as well as in me—a human heart, which cries out for the living God, whatever our critical heart cries out for—will accept it as a revelation; we shall cling to it and love it as we never can love any books or any theories which are merely assented to because we are told there is some superlative evidence for them which we ought to acknowledge. And then when once this Gospel of the Atonement, of an actual Reconciler and a real Reconciliation, has made itself heard above the din of explanations and controversies—if it be only in a few ears—creeds and sacraments will come forth again as the simple witnesses, to all creatures in all lands,

that the Prince of Darkness has been overcome, that they are in the Kingdom of God. At the first Reformation the intense individual feeling of those who received the good news marred the effect of it as a testimony to the societies of men. In us that social feeling must be addressed first, the individual consciousness can only be reached through it. If there is no Atonement for us all, there is no Atonement for any one of us. There may be theories of sacrifice without number: *the* sacrifice must be for Man, or it is not for any man.

The fanaticism which led many of the Reformers to cry out for the destruction of the Mass was very excusable. It seemed to them a terrible mockery of all that was most sacred and divine, a denial of the very blessing of which it contained the sign and the promise. But the Mass has lasted to our day: it has not been altered; it excites the same feeling of indignation in many men as it did three centuries ago; but it has also an immense, even an irresistible attraction for many who have not been brought up under the shadow of it, who were taught in their infancy to abhor it. Some say that it speaks of something which might be believed in former days: some feel that the oppressions of

the nineteenth century demand such a belief as much as those of any century. We do want it more than our forefathers did! We want the belief of an actual atonement, not an imaginary one. We cannot acknowledge, as some say that they can, a kindly Father who leaves His children to perish in their own wilfulness. We cannot always be satisfied with talk about civilization and the progress of the species. Does God civilize? Does He care for the progress of the species or of individuals? The people will ask this question. It will arise out of their deepest heart. The critics cannot answer it. Can the Devil? Can He who, as we say, came to destroy the works of the Devil? If He answers it, there will indeed be a reformation. Prayers will not be disjoined from sacrifice. The Son who said, "Lo, I came to do Thy will, O God," is the High Priest of all who say, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven:" He who with strong cries and tears prayed to Him that could deliver from death, is the High Priest of all who say, "Deliver us from evil."

And who can help forward this reformation better than you, my friend? We debate about the word propitiation. We ask ourselves what St. Paul meant when he spoke of God setting

forth His Son as a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness, for the remission of sins that are past? Did he mean that Jesus poured out His blood to buy off the wrath of His Father? We, I say, *debate* this question. You can answer it. You know what propitiations to Gods that want to be bought off—who demand compensations for pardon—are. You know that the conception of the Unseen Power in which these thoughts originated is the conception of an Evil Power, and that the fruits of that conception are immoral, degrading, destructive. You may have the utmost sympathy with those who have fallen into such conceptions. You may not feel that you have the least right to condemn them, knowing that you are tempted to the same. But it is from these conceptions—exactly from these—that you go forth to rescue your fellow-men. It is with these that you are carrying on an uncompromising, exterminating warfare. You have learnt what the weapons of that warfare must be. You understand the deep inward yearning that prompts the cry for propitiation. You believe that yearning to be divinely inspired, to exist in men because they are created to know God, and to be at peace with Him. And therefore you cannot subvert propitiations to evil

powers, except by bringing out in its full force the propitiation which is prompted simply by the Divine Love, which is given without money and price, which is set forth in the Son who is the express image of the Father, whose sacrifice is the fulfilment of the Father's will. The two thoughts *correspond* to each other undoubtedly. The Devil's counterfeit must always correspond to the image which it mocks. But woe to you if that correspondence tempts you to put the one, or any modification of the one, for the other! Woe to you if, under pretence of meeting the heathen half way, or from a dim notion that you can cure his schemes of compensation by telling him of a larger and more adequate compensation, you establish all his worst thoughts, you ratify his homage to evil powers under new names! This, my friend, is your peril, as it has been the peril of Christendom in all its missionary enterprises. Resist it in God's strength, and so bring *us* back to the faith of God's elect, to that real communion with sufferers on earth and spirits about the Throne, of which the Mass has presented the feeblest of all likenesses, but the hope of which it may through God's gracious providence have kept alive in many hearts.—Yours, &c.

LETTER XI.

THE CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—When the Bishop of Oxford spoke of our indifference to theological doctrines and theological distinctions, he was probably thinking especially of the doctrine of the Atonement, and of the distinction of Persons in the Holy Trinity. On the former subject I spoke in my last letter. Our indifference to the meaning of Atonement and Sacrifice, as it is set forth in that book of the New Testament which is expressly devoted to the treatment of them, —our disposition to substitute for this meaning or to blend with it one which is essentially contrary to it,—this, it seemed to me, was leading us rapidly to that confusion between the God in Whom is light and no darkness, and the Prince of Darkness, which the Bishop said was threatening us. In this letter I turn to the other still more awful, still more radical

principle of theology—that which is expressed in the form of our Baptism, which is the groundwork of the Creeds.

“God,” said St. Paul to the inhabitants of the city which was wholly given to idolatry, to men who were mocking him and calling him a babbler—“*God is not far from any one of us, for in Him we live, and move, and have our being.*” Who was this God of whom he speaks? We say, “The Father of an infinite majesty; His honourable, true, and only Son; also the Holy Ghost the Comforter.” This is the One God, blessed for ever, in Whom we live, and move, and have our being. We are baptized into this Name; we bring our children to be baptized into it. We pronounce it after every Psalm which was written in the old time: we declare that this Name was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. We invoke this Name when we are praying against pride, malice, and uncharitableness; against fornication and all deadly sin; against plague, pestilence and famine, battle, murder and sudden death; against heresy, schism and contempt of the divine words and commandments. In this Name we bless our congregations: to know this Name, we tell them, is the glory of the saints about

the Throne. Eternal salvation is connected in the Athanasian Creed with this Name, eternal damnation with the loss of it.

Our Church then, by its initial rites, by its forms of worship, by its solemnest professions of faith, affirms that it stands in this Name. So far as it is a Missionary Church, it aspires to seal the nations with this Name. That is its commission; it can plead no other right to go forth on any errand of conversion. And its course with reference to the nations is clearly defined. If we recognize St. Paul as the great missionary, we can have no doubt about it. We tell all men, those who are most incredulous of our message, most hostile to it, that this Name is about them, that they are living, moving, having their being in it. They do not acquire this privilege by baptism: we baptize them because they have it.

Now is it not true that the greatest theological indistinctness prevails on this subject, not among those who profess to disbelieve the Trinity only, but among those who make the most vehement profession of acknowledging the Trinity? Do we affirm that this Name indeed compasses the universe, that it is not far from any one of us? Do we not say that Arians, Unitarians, Sabellians,

and a multitude who partly share their tenets without knowing it, are outside this Name—that they have no part or lot in it? Do we not question whether Quakers can have much to do with it, since they refuse the outward sign and pledge of being adopted into it? Do we not therefore say *à fortiori* that men of the kind whom St. Paul addressed on Mars' Hill are altogether aloof from it?

Here is a difference between our theology and that of the Apostles who were sent forth to baptize the nations—between our theology and the theology of our services and sacraments—which cannot long be hidden, which must stand out glaringly in our practice. Many circumstances in our time, those especially to which the Bishop alludes, compel us to notice and reflect upon it. There is, he hints, a disposition to fraternize on the ground of indifference or unbelief. 'We cannot know much,' is the cry of many, 'about the heavenly or unseen world; if there are truths concerning it, they do not concern us. Let us meet on the broad basis of our earthly interests, or of acts of service to our fellow-creatures. Theology may go where it will.' Well! this scheme is not only announced; it is acted out by strong churchmen, by preachers, and

divines of the High Church and the Low Church schools. They meet the Unitarians and Quakers whom they excommunicate on the ground of earthly interests : they will buy of either, or sell to either. They meet both when they are devising sanitary measures for the good of cities, or benevolent measures for employing, if not educating, the poor. Think what an effect this indifference to theology, this acknowledgment that a broader basis than that which it affords, may be found in the ordinary conditions of daily life, must have when it is seen in those who in their schools and synods treat theology as the most important subject of all, the bond between heaven and earth ! Have not men who avow infidelity a right to say, " Whatever you may pretend, theology is that which separates you into little circles. You never break loose from those circles, you never take up your position as men among men except when you forget it." That such words are spoken continually, that such facts afford a justification for them, we do not want a Bishop to inform us. But no one is more capable of awakening us to the significance of the words—he is never more entirely fulfilling his office than when he leads us to reflect on the pregnancy of the facts.

Will he then go on to urge that excommunication in its old sense should be revived—that the intercourse of society, the buying and selling in shops, should be made dependent on theological opinions? That remedy for the evil may be suggested: if it is adopted it must be adopted thoroughly. No half measures can be of the least avail: every concession is the concession of a principle, practically of the whole principle which is at issue. The Bishop did not propose a recurrence to a course which he knew to be impossible. He took the far wiser method of urging us seriously to consider what we do believe, of conjuring us not to let *that* go.

Here, indeed, is a remedy. If I consider what I say that I believe, if I determine to hold that fast, I may discover that I have in theology a much broader as well as firmer meeting-ground with men as men, with men of all kinds and professions, of all modes and habits of thought, with men who attack my convictions, with men who are indifferent about their own convictions, than any maxims of trade, of convenience, of modern civilization, of modern tolerance, can supply me with. I may find how it is that the most practical and energetic of those maxims

have been developed and are able to exercise so much power in the world ; what it is that has enfeebled them and made them an excuse for insincere evasions, for a sham politeness covering an inward dislike. If I believed in the Trinity—if I accepted the form of my baptism, interpreted by the Apostle of the Gentiles, as the expression of an actual truth—I must have a bond of union with Arians, Unitarians, Sabellians, as well as with those who reject the form of baptism, which I certainly could never obtain through the necessity of bargaining with them or sitting with them at dinner-parties. I must believe that the God whom I worship is not far from any one of them, that they are in His presence at every moment, that the love of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit is an atmosphere which is surrounding them as much as it is surrounding me, that I have no right to dwell in it which is not also their right. I cannot make the acts of the Father or the Son dependent on their confession of the Father and the Son. What would become of me if those acts were dependent on *my* confession of them ! I cannot measure the power of the Spirit over them by their recognition of His power ; if I did I should not be able to account for any of the good thoughts and deeds which

must, according to my creed, flow from that Spirit—which can have no other source. Whatever recognition there is in them of any Person in the Trinity I must, if I hold fast my faith, attribute to the influence of the Trinity upon them ; whatever denial there is of any Person in the Trinity, I know that I cannot remove by any arguments of mine. If it is overcome, the Spirit of truth must overcome it. I shall be His minister in overcoming it so far as I am governed by Him ; if I am resisting Him or letting another spirit—the contentious, dividing, persecuting spirit—usurp his throne in me, I shall confirm the denial.

“ All this is very well,” I shall be told ; “ it is true in a certain sense. Of course we ought to deal charitably with opponents ; but we must maintain the truth once delivered to the saints.” Just so ; it is what I am saying—further that we must not let any sense, certain or uncertain, interfere with this duty ; that our allegiance to the faith once delivered to the saints demands it of us ; that we are traitors to that faith whenever we do not perform it. How much of such treachery there has been in me, how little I understand that human fellowship of which I speak, how awkward I often feel in the company of those

who dissent from the convictions which I hold dear, how inclined I am to treat them as incapable of entering into any deep truth, how readily I assume that we can only converse about the weather or the stocks—this I must sadly and shamefully confess. But I know that the spirit which prompts this kind of feeling is the spirit of vanity, of dogmatism, of heresy, not the Spirit of the Father and the Son. I know that if I were thoroughly possessed and penetrated by that Spirit, I should find myself in sympathy with the beliefs of all sorts of men, that I should hate their denials and my own, and should be always enlisting their beliefs against their denials. Till I do this, I shall not count that I am making a true confession of my faith in the Holy Trinity. I shall always suspect that I am confounding the Persons or dividing the Substance.

This language about Persons and Substance, which is to me most real, which speaks to my conscience and detects my moral obliquities, conveys no sense whatever to many minds. Is it not madness in me, and wild fighting against God, to insist that it should convey a sense to them? If I am thankful to God for preserving that and every other form of speech which has a true scientific force, for the use of mankind, I may be equally

thankful to Him that He leads His children by the most different routes to the knowledge of Him. I may be thankful that no ignorance of metaphysics and no bad metaphysics can hinder the operation of His Spirit, the revelation of His truth. If the message of the gospel, the words of Christ's commission, have not deceived us, the operation of that Spirit, the revelation of that Truth, must be for the commonest people of the earth, for all nations.

And where is the church which is entrusted with this gospel and commission? Suppose I were to say, "It is the Church of England, *not* the Church of Italy, *not* the Church of France, *not* the Church of Russia," should I not be denying the baptismal formula, should I not be excluding those who are marked out by a simple and comprehensive sign for a mighty work? Whatever church does say this, surely disclaims its own title-deeds, refuses to assert its office, makes itself heretical. How ready *every* church is to make itself heretical by separating itself from the rest, how ready it is to fraternise in some opinions, and so to deny the Head of the whole body, I have already confessed. It is the sin for which we have all to seek repentance; it is the homage to the Evil Spirit, the Spirit of Antichrist, which we have

all paid. We have accused each other of being heretics, and we have all been heretics. We have all set up notions and dogmas of our understandings against Him who has given us understandings, against Him who is guiding us to seek for that Truth which passes all our understandings. We have said that there is such a Truth, that in it we have eternal life. And then we reduce this too down to the level of our conceptions. What *we* hold about the Name which we declare in the most solemn language to be incomprehensible and eternal, is substituted for the Name; we believe in ourselves—in what we think—not in God.

But such a belief as this cannot last; our notions will not uphold us when we are sinking in deep waters. We may call in evidences, arguments, authority, what we will; but if they are not God, they will not help creatures who are made in the likeness of God, who demand Him as the object of their trust. If we do not worship Him, we shall worship the Spirit that is opposed to Him: we shall pay sacrifice to the Author of eternal death, because the Author of eternal life is banished from us.

We, then, who repeat the Athanasian Creed may have much need to reflect upon what we call

its damnatory clauses. They may have a far more awful sense than we have seen in them. They may say to us, “*You may put yourselves out of fellowship with the Spirit of truth and love. You may bid the Holy One cease from before you.*” Wherever else *Eternal* death is taken to mean *future* death, it cannot be so taken in this creed, unless its own most serious words are emptied of their significance. The word eternal has been expressly associated with Him who is, and was, and is to come; if it occurs in a later passage of the same document, that sense must be given to it there. The eternal life must be the life of the Eternal God of which men are permitted to partake. The eternal death must be the separation from the Eternal God, whatever may be the length of that separation. Let those who insist upon the natural sense of theological expressions see to it that they adhere to the natural sense of this expression in the creed to which they appeal most. Let them then consider what havoc they make of the divinest promises and threatenings of the New Testament, if they introduce any other sense into its inspired language.

Oh, my friend! it is not to weaken the strength of these promises and threatenings,

that I have written to you. They overwhelm me with their grandeur and their terror. I believe that God is arousing us to feel that grandeur and that terror as we have never felt it. The loss of the God of infinite charity, the exclusion from fellowship with Him, what plummets of ours can measure this abyss? And are we not in danger of it every hour? Is not the danger greatest when our security is greatest? If we abide in opinions—any opinions whatsoever—the hurricane will sweep our refuges away, they will prove to be refuges of lies. If we abide in the Father and the Son, we must be safe. But the Son said—and He spoke the mind of His father—*“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged, and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again.”* And that same Son said, *“If you that are fathers give good gifts to your children, shall not my Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?”* We may in the full sense of our unholiness, untruthfulness, unloveliness, ask for the Spirit of Holiness, of Truth and Love. He can expel from us the spirit which leads us into impurity, hatred, and falsehood.

When that Holy Spirit indeed fills the church, its proper dwelling-place, what shall that church

be called? We hear much of the Church of the *Past*. The Apostolic age, the age of the Fathers, the Middle age, have each their champions. To recover the traditions of other times, is said to be the great duty of our time. We have many who are equally opposed to these retrospections, to the novelties which are imported from foreign lands, to the dreams of individual projectors. They cling to the Church of the *Present*. There are of course many divisions of that church. The conservative defends that division of it with which he has local and hereditary sympathies: the others, in proportion as they differ from that, he suspects of not having any part or lot in the divine body. Not a few ardent spirits, and some by no means ardent, have pictured to themselves a Church of the *Future*. The pictures are inevitably unlike: one may be highly coloured, one may be conspicuous only for its neutral tint. But all foretell that this church shall be a contrast to what we see around us, or read of in history.

The church which I am occupied with, cannot answer to any of these names. Yet it may do, it must do, justice to the thoughts which each represents. It cannot shut itself up in the habits and modes of thinking of any

period. It is by its profession the CHURCH OF THE ETERNAL, of Him who is, and who was, and who is to come. If it abandons this profession, it ceases to shine with any divine glory : its glory is its own.

I know that when one speaks, though it be in the language of St. Paul and St. John, of "dwelling in God," of "abiding in the Father and the Son," a suspicion immediately arises that Pantheism is creeping in. Distinguished men of the rationalist school have said that the Apostle of the Gentiles when he wrote to the Ephesians of "one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all," was anticipating Spinoza. And so perhaps he would have been, if he had not written in the same Epistle—"We wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with spiritual wickedness in high places." If the Apostle had not been a fighter, if he had not confessed at every moment a deadly adversary of himself and of his kind, he might have plunged into that gulf in which it has been said that all moral, as well as all theological, distinctions are lost. Men who have not the sense of a war in themselves and in the universe, in which Good or Evil—a SPIRIT of good or of

evil—must triumph at last, may find just as much Pantheism in the excommunicated Jew of Tarsus as in the excommunicated Jew of Amsterdam. If they do not, I must reckon it a proof that they have entered far less into the mind of the Apostle than his countryman did. On the other hand those who *are* engaged in such a struggle may have the intensest sympathy with that profound perception of the necessity of God to their own existence,—of the impossibility of living and moving without God—which was imparted to Spinoza. They will not doubt that the God of his fathers gave him that perception. But they will find a depth below his depth, in the Psalmist, who fled to God as a refuge from his enemies, who cried to God, “Why hast Thou forsaken me?” They will have an affection for Spinoza which those who go to him for arguments against the reality of his nation’s history cannot have. They will never charge it as a crime upon a man in his circumstances—cut off from one people, not naturalized in another—that he was unable to perceive the simplicity and continuousness of that history. They will rejoice that they are not obliged to sink Humanity in Divinity as he was; that they can acknowledge One who is perfect God and perfect Man. They will reflect how he

may rise in judgment against them for confessing Jesus to be the image of the Father, and yet not yielding to that love which Spinoza felt in his inspired moments—whatever the critics who reverence him only for being unlike vulgar people may say to the contrary—was embracing and penetrating the universe.

To deny that doctrine may be to escape from Spinoza; it is not to follow St. Paul. As his Master had endured the contradiction of Pharisees because He would preach the kingdom of God to publicans and harlots, and invite them to enter it, so St. Paul declared that the offence of the Cross would cease if he were willing to preach circumcision, to adopt the exclusiveness of his race, to deny that the Head of every man had appeared. And now we are commanded in the name of Paul, in the name of Jesus, to make the universal Church as narrow as we can, because the Sermon on the Mount has declared that “strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth to life, and few there be that find it.” What true and wonderful words those are! How beautifully they are illustrated by the context of that discourse which bids us be like our Father in Heaven, who sends His rain on the just and the unjust, the good and the evil; which sets

forth everywhere the contrast between His mind and that of the Pharisees. "Strait indeed is the gate," since any man who would enter it must stoop low down to the level of the meanest of the race! "Narrow indeed is the way," for he who has passed through the gate must not then lift himself as if he had become different from others through that humiliation! It must continue through his whole pilgrimage: he must be every day learning more and more how disposed he is to exalt himself on his wisdom or his righteousness, on his faith or his works; he must be discovering the vanity and falsehood of that boast; he must be brought down to the state of the child and the beggar. A narrow way indeed! if that is the way to life, which of us can find it? Surely not one, if God did not Himself, by severe discipline, draw him out of that broad way into which all men are disposed to run, the way of thinking himself good and right and despising others. The eternal life, —the life of the Eternal God—can never surely be reached by any of us till we see Him as Christ revealed Him to us, till we understand what He is through the Death for all men which was the perfect fulfilment of His will, the perfect satisfaction of His love,—till therefore we re-

nounce all exclusiveness, till we confess a charity which is surrounding us all and seeking to bring us all within its circle.

“What, then, would you include Jews, Turks, infidels, heretics of all kinds, within your Church of the Eternal?” I would include none within it who would not include themselves. The Romish scheme of compelling people to come in has been tried long enough, and has not succeeded so well that one would wish to revive it. But supposing there is such a Church as this, supposing any of us may claim a portion in it, the reason must be that we confess God is drawing us into it, and that this drawing of His has a compulsion in it which, however long it may be resisted, will prevail at last over the stubbornest wills. If we consider that we have not stubborn wills, or that we have less stubborn wills than those who have had fewer blessings, I hope we shall be converted from that opinion; while we hold it, how can we walk in the way that leadeth to life, how can we confess our sins or humble ourselves before God? Do we fear the reproach of saying that the Love, the everlasting, unchanging Love, of God, is about Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics? Then let us preach no Gospel, let us send forth no missionaries, let us not

repeat our Good Friday prayer. That Prayer must be a falsehood on our lips, unless we believe that the Love of Calvary is what St. Paul affirmed it to be.

My friend, it is and will be the offence of the cross in our day to make this confession in defiance, not of circumcised, but of baptized men. In doing it we shall glorify our baptism as no exclusiveness can glorify it,—for we shall glorify the Holy Trinity. Against the notion of being required to adopt a formula, to accept theological refinements, the age rebels, and will rebel more and more. Instead of complaining that it is so, let us believe that God has Himself inspired the rebellion that He may teach us not to believe in a formula, but in the Being of whom the formula speaks. What greater mercy can He show us than this? What is more terrible than to say: We believe in the Father, and not to draw nigh to Him as if He were the Father; We believe in the Son, and only to think of Him as shut up in the leaves of a book; We believe in the Holy Ghost, and never to own when He convinces us of sin, of righteousness, of judgment; never to be guided by Him into love and truth? O God! shatter our formulas as thy servant of old brake in pieces the brazen

serpent, rather than that they should lead us to such perdition as this! But, oh! by them or without them, by us or without us, let thy reconciling Name be revealed to the sons of men, to Jews, Turks, heathens, and to us heretics of all kinds and schools, that we may be one even as Thou, Father, art in the Son, and the Son is in Thee, united in the blessed Spirit of peace and holiness for ever.—
Yours, &c.

LETTER XII.

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—You are often told by philosophical friends at home that a missionary must seek to civilize before he seeks to convert. You are often warned by theological friends that your first duty is to teach Christianity; many of the fruits of civilization will no doubt follow when that has been faithfully received.

A long controversy; to you sometimes a distracting one—oftener, I should suppose, a wearisome one. While you deal with these phrases, Christianity and Civilization, it must be an endless one. Each requires translation, and who is to be the translator? Christianity, if it is taken as the complex of notions and habits which belong to Christendom, to the countries which acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, may be treated as one of the phenomena of modern civilization. Somehow men in this Western world have been

brought to adopt these notions and habits; they have undergone various alterations and transformations; they have been partly inherited, partly acquired; they have still a great influence on society. But when you proceed to examine this phenomenon further, you are met with most tormenting questions as to the number of these notions and habits which belong to Christianity, or to something quite different from Christianity. You hear most various answers to these questions from those who profess a general agreement with each other, who are citizens of the same nation, who are even united in the same sect or school.

If you look at the subject from the other side, you encounter equal difficulties. You are to impart civilization. What civilization? Is the East to receive all the customs and practices which the West consecrates with that name? Are you so satisfied with the civilization of France, or Italy, or England, that you would transfer that whole to India or China, suppose it were in your power to do so, suppose you were not brought face to face with another kind of civilization which treats yours as barbarism?

These are—you know it well—practical, not speculative difficulties. The practical Englishman

indeed cuts through them: he has a strong rough faith that what he holds, it must be good for every man to hold, that what he is it would be good for every man to be. It is, I say, a *faith* of a real kind so far as it goes; perhaps there is a deeper faith in it than the person who exercises it is quite aware of: it is not only or chiefly a faith in what an individual can accomplish, it is an assurance that he is one of a race which has a calling to vanquish and renovate. Therefore it has had, and still has, an amazing success, but a success which we are sometimes reminded has a limit, which has turned and may turn to great discomfiture. And if the civilization at home should prove to be weak—weak in its very roots—if there should be a discovery that its blessings only reach a small minority of those who dwell in the land which boasts of it most, and that within this minority there is much which is not sound, which is even rotten, what becomes of the attempt to diffuse this civilization? Who will make the attempt? What will the attempt be good for?

Such considerations may be easily banished from our minds by agreeable self-flatteries mixed with some earnest truths. But they cannot easily be banished from your mind; you must

work out this problem, you must find some way of solving it.

The hint which I have given you is so simple and obvious a one that you may be inclined to pass it by. But perhaps it deserves consideration. *We* have connected Christianity with the Name into which we are baptized. It does not signify to us what other men think. They may have a different conception of the whole subject. Unitarians may laugh immensely at the credulity which binds us to an old superstition, or may charge us solemnly with denying the unity of God. We cannot blame them for doing so ; but we must blame ourselves if we make a profession by our creeds, to which we afterwards attach no importance in our acts. We have declared that not some notions or habits of ours were the objects of our faith, or the grounds of our faith : that in the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, the one God blessed for ever, we have both the ground and object of it. This has been, and is, our confession : this has been and is the definition and warrant of your enterprise. How does it apply to the question as to the relation between Christianity and Civilization ?

The whole dispute as to the different kinds and forms of Christianity, as to the different

opinions which do or do not enter, or should or should not enter, into the scheme of Christianity—the very word, as having no authority in Scripture, no place in the creeds—you may dismiss at once. And in declining to decide between the disputants, you take up no new ground: you simply stand on the old ground; you refuse to abandon that which Christendom has recognized, in terms, as the bond of its fellowship; you refuse to substitute heresies, Roman, Greek, Anglican, for the Church of God.

Then as to the other demand, or rather the two demands, Ought not you to civilize, and if to civilize, then what is to be the shape and mould of your civilization? To the first you answer, I believe in a Spirit who is at work on the inner life of human society, who is contending with all that makes it brutal or effeminate, slavish or anarchical. I believe in a Spirit who is not content with the semblances of civility and manliness, of freedom or order, who seeks to deliver us from whatever makes us ungracious to each other, cowardly in our resolutions and acts, from whatever leads us to crouch to any tyrant, or to set up any form of self-will in our own hearts. I believe in a Spirit who can never be satisfied till He awakens real energies:

till those energies bring forth fruit in action. I believe in a Spirit who carries on continuously a conflict with the sloth and feebleness in me and in my fellow-creatures: who will give them and me no rest till He casts out from us the devils of sloth and feebleness. This Spirit I am to proclaim wherever I go. I am to say that He is the Spirit of the Father who has created us in His Son, of the Son who has redeemed us as His brethren. I am to assure those who hear me that their baptism means that they may be possessed by this civilizing, reconciling, uniting Spirit, that they need not be possessed by any other; though the struggle between them will always be fierce—more, not less fierce, when they have claimed their place in the universal family, than when they have supposed themselves separate creatures, the servants of demons, the victims of malignant powers which they must propitiate.

And surely we then dispose of the other question, "*What civilization will you bestow on these men?*" You cannot mould them, thank God! into English or European fashions; you cannot subvert or alter any part of the Oriental constitution which He has seen fit that they should possess. We have learnt the best

wisdom which books can impart out of an Oriental book : that has given us our lessons in what is human, what is universal : that has been a continued protest against the exclusiveness of our Western habits. What is dark, unwholesome, dividing, in Oriental manners, the Spirit of holiness and truth will strive against ; what is graceful, generous, sincere in them, He will bring forth in its might ; these will be our examples and warnings, these He will not allow any coarse or restless tempers of our continent to displace.

This will be your mode of dealing with this embarrassing question, on which so much of the modern learning about races has been thrown away. Such learning may be exceedingly useful in pointing out the different aspects under which the same truth may present itself to different kinds of men, very useful in showing how the divine education has been working in one or another part of the world. It becomes mischievous when it is used to prove that there is no common truth which may embrace all human beings, no divine education which may lead them into that truth. That this lore respecting races, grounded on physiological observations and political experience, has been pleaded as the justification of slavery—that

doctrines of equality loudly asserted, and a scheme of society apparently based upon them, could not overcome that justification—that a great war has been the only answer to it—this the most recent facts proclaim to us. Would that war have been necessary if the Church—instead of regarding itself as an artificial Society, either opposed to states and nations, more exclusive than any, or else as bound to accept and endorse the habits of any nation in which it was tolerated—had proclaimed all men of every race and colour to be sons of God in Christ the Son of Man, and had recognized at the same time all differences of habits, temperaments, mental or physical constitution, which have been manifested in fact or detected by science, as signs of the need of a culture which only a Divine Spirit who knows the conditions of every man and every society can give us wisdom to impart or can make effectual?

I need not tell you that such language will sound particularly offensive to those who speak most in our day of civilization. If they recognize some modification of Christianity as beneficial to the world in its present state, it would be especially *such* a modification as would exclude all idea of a Good Spirit or an Evil Spirit. If they re-

cognize a certain improvement in the tone of Christians—something which indicates an advance upon the notions of the early age, or the middle age, or the age of the Reformers—the improvement is this—that while we adopt the dialect of our predecessors respecting a Divine Teacher and a holy or unholy inspiration, we do not, in fact, believe in them, but treat any genuine believer in them as fanatical. This appears to the worshippers of Civilization a step in the right direction. They are puzzled, indeed, by two observations. The first is, that the more unbelieving we have become respecting these inward illuminations, the more we are offended by any questions which have been raised about the books of Scripture. The second is, that on the very summit of Civilization—in the select, even the scientific circles which represent it—there has appeared, even in the most grotesque and superstitious shape, a *demand* for spiritual communication, for intercourse with the invisible world, *of some kind*. So that the gain on our part seems at least questionable, the security on theirs against the enthusiasm which has deserted us, very precarious indeed.

Therefore, those bolder men who affirm that

Christianity now as well as in older days—now more than in older days—is, under every form which it may assume, a hindrance to civilization, are far more likely to obtain credence than these compromisers. They can appeal with mighty force to our divisions and animosities; they can prove that these augment and exasperate, if they do not produce, all the strifes which are at work in nations and families; they can ask whether such a nuisance must not be abated, if the world is to be reformed. I think so; I hope you think so. If you believe in the Spirit of unity, the Spirit of the Father and the Son, you must think so. And, if you do, you must also believe that that which civilization cannot effect through the weakness of the flesh by any of its arts, will be effected by the mighty energy of the power which it has denied; that the abuses which it can only sweep away by destroying itself, will be swept away by Him who can make—who is continually making—all things new. Let, then, these denouncers of our Christianity raise their voices to the loudest pitch. They may bring home to our consciences the guilt of Devil-worship, though they say there is no Devil. They may show us that we have been traitors to the Spirit of truth and love, though

they may call us madmen for confessing such a Spirit.

And if they do lead us to confession and repentance, there will be the dawn for the world of a brighter and nobler civilization than any which they have dreamed of. A civilization without a Spirit is a civilization which must always be limited to the easy and comfortable portion of society. It will affect their behaviour, not their manners; it will come forth in an external and dishonest politeness, not in gentleness and grace. In a commerical community, the possession of money will be the highest sign of it. Art, literature, science, religion will bow to that, and will take its standard for their standard. The mass of the people will be regarded as dangerous. To keep them from mischief—if preaching does not avail—they may be offered education, or amusement, or a share of political power. But they will not be revered as men; for that is not the distinction upon which their superiors value themselves—rather upon their being unlike the rest of mankind.

The poor of the earth have always craved for this message of a Divine Spirit, have always felt, however they may have expressed the feeling, that some Spirit, not divine, but the contrary of divine,

was oppressing and tormenting them. Civilization tells them they are deluded in these convictions ; but civilization does not happen to know what is going on in their hovels or in their hearts. Whenever a gospel penetrates into them we may hear strange things. The son of a Saxon miner—an English tinker—may have deadly conflicts with the Devil, by the reports of which witty men will be greatly amused. But the miner's son comes forth from his battle to emancipate the Nations ; the tinker rises from a barbarian into a cultivated man capable of writing a *Pilgrim's Progress*, capable of speaking to the spirits of multitudes in his own class and in all classes ; recognized by them as a fellow sufferer and a fellow man, even when his formal language seems most to exclude them from that privilege or to assert another for himself.


Was he wrong, or was Luther wrong, in that which was the central thought of their lives ? Wrong I should say so far as either of them supposed that he was not wrestling with a Spirit, but with a visible shape ; wrong so far as either of them believed that their conflicts were different in kind from those of human creatures in all places and times. Right so far as they held and taught what facts proclaim abroad to all who will hear them, what facts proclaim in our own selves

if we do not prefer dreams to facts,—that there is something (if you call it a *body*, then you fall into the error which we impute to Luther and Bunyan—I call it a *Spirit* that I may avoid their error,) which draws us to be enemies of each other, enemies of Peace, of Justice, of Truth. A conviction which would be absolutely intolerable if it were not met and overreached by another,—that this Spirit is withdrawing us from the control of that Spirit who has been the spring of all the beauty and harmony that appears in God's outward creation, or in man His image.

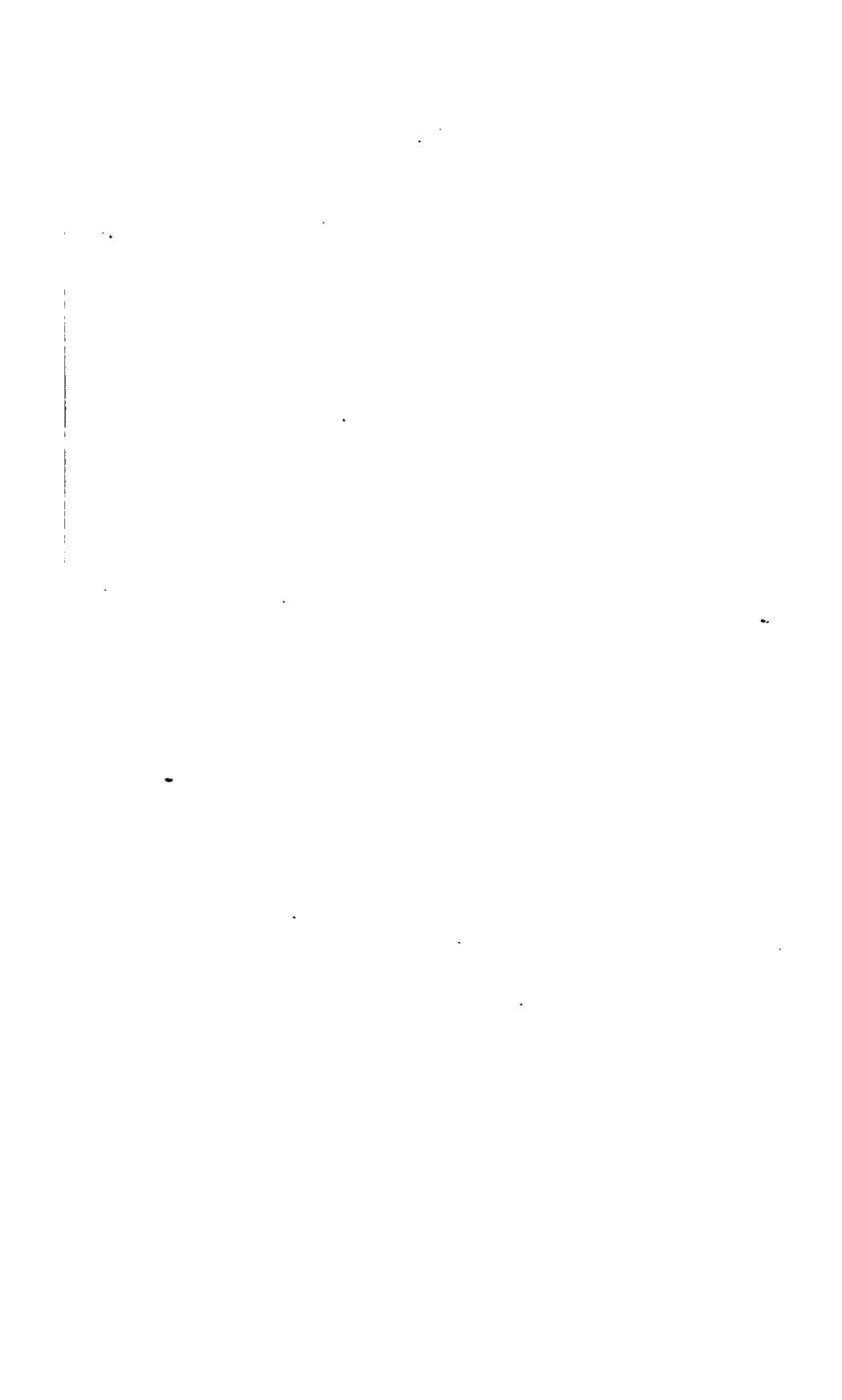
My Friend ! it is a hard fight to believe that this Spirit is the stronger, not the weaker of the two. You know how hard it is. But it is the very fight of faith. We cease to believe at all when we cease to believe this. Nothing drives us to it like despair of ourselves, like the certainty that we must sink to an ever lower death, if there is not One who would raise us to the highest life. Out of that despair springs a hope for all. No spirit can be out of the reach of God's Spirit. No part of creation can be beyond the government of Him who has subdued human hearts, who has the keys of death and hell. A Father who can own us as His children, who can enable us in spite of our reluctance and obstinacy to

claim the title, will not yield at last to the father of lies. It may seem to us, sometimes, as if death had vanquished life in this world. But the earth comes fresh each morning out of the darkness in which she had been buried. It seems at times as if division were to banish peace for ever. But there is forgiveness among enemies, reconciliation of friends; the wars of nations end at last. It seems at times as if the God of Damnation was hiding the God of Salvation from the sight of us and of all men. But no unbelief of ours can subvert the faith of God. By the promise of a new heaven and a new earth, some understand another heaven and another earth. Would that be a promise?—that there should be another heaven than that in which God dwells, another earth than that which He pronounced very good? No, surely. Christ proclaimed the new heaven when he said, Go into all the nations, which have had a heaven of dark demons, or of a mere arbitrary Sovereign, and baptize them in the all-loving Name. The earth was declared to be a new earth when the Son walked upon it, and died in it, and rose in it, when the Spirit took possession of poor men's hearts and lips, and bound them into a human family. It will be indeed a

new heaven when all the evil thoughts which we have cherished about God shall yield to the full revelation of Himself. It will be a new earth when all that has defiled its beauty, all that has filled it with death and misery, shall be purged away. If it is the privilege of the spirits of just men made perfect to know the reality of that heaven which they believed in here; to see the earth which they beheld here, as God sees it—we may enter into their blessedness so far as we relinquish all thought of a heaven or an earth made for our selfish pleasure, so far as we desire a heaven and an earth in which the glory of God shall be unveiled to all the creatures whom He has made.
—Yours, &c.



THE END.



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